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Week 52: Fall Mission Feeding, last week

Randy Robison

John Bevere #1

Studio Discussion:

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. I'm so excited to have John Bevere back with me. We're going to talk about some really good things. But John, welcome back.

JOHN: It's an honor to be back, Randy. I love being with you.

RANDY: So last time it was just you and me. We were talking about *The Awe of God*. Out of that you have a new devotional called *Everyday Courage*.

JOHN: It is a spinoff but about 70% of the material is fresh, new, and is not in *The Awe of God*.

RANDY: So, the biggest thing, I think, that you really set sort of straight is this idea of fear. Because it can be a little confusing.

JOHN: It can.

RANDY: Jesus shows up and says, "Fear not." Angels show up and say, "Fear not." The Bible says, "Fear is the beginning of wisdom." The fear of the Lord this -- what is it on fear?

JOHN: Here is where we went wrong. In the 1990s and before that, we tried to totally eliminate fear. Remember even F.D.R. said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Well, I'd like to challenge that. There are unhealthy fears and there are healthy fears. An unhealthy fear is absolutely what we want out of our life. The healthy fear is, let me give you an example: Fear produces wisdom. The fear of me not getting mauled by a mother grizzly bear will give me the

wisdom to not mess with her cubs in front of her. That is not an unhealthy fear. Now it can turn unhealthy because I'm going to go, I'm not even going to walk in the woods because I might get mauled by a bear. So, what we want to eliminate from our life is all unhealthy fear.

What the church fathers taught for 2,000 years, and I don't know why but, in our generation, it stopped, is they taught the only to eradicate all unhealthy fear is to fear God. Now this is what Jesus taught us. He said, "Don't fear those that can kill the body. But fear him who after he's killed the body can cast the soul into hell." Now listen to what he goes on to say two verses later. He said, "Fear not little flock, you're more valuable to your Father than sparrows." Wait a minute! Jesus told me to fear God, then he says, "Fear not." He's differentiating right there in Luke 12 between being scared of God and the fear of God.

So, the first thing we need to say is the fear of God is not to be scared of God. Because how can we have a relationship with someone if we're afraid of them? And this is what I love. God's number one desire for every one of us, every one of you listening, God's number one desire is to be intimate with you. In fact, he wants to be intimate with you more than you want to be with him. So why would he want you to be scared of him?

So, we've got to start there. I think what happens is people see when they read *The Awe of God*, oh wow! I stayed away from the fear of the Lord because I thought perfected love casts out fear. You were confusing a spirit of fear with the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord gives you wisdom. The fear of the Lord prolongs life. The fear of the Lord gives you a length of days. The fear of the Lord gives you security. It frees you from all other unhealthy fears including the biggest one, the fear of man.

RANDY: Even bigger than the fear of death.

JOHN: Bigger than the fear of death. When you walk in the fear of God you no longer fear death. You no longer fear what do people think about me. It is very freeing and it is very wonderful. That's why Psalm 112 says, Randy, "Happy are those who fear the Lord, who delight in obeying his commands." There is a lot revealed in there more than what the eye sees on the

surface.

Paul makes this statement. He says, "As you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but in my absence also, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Isn't it interesting? He didn't say work out your salvation with love and kindness. The next statement is the clue: "For it's God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The fear of the Lord actually gives you a desire to obey God. It is supernatural because it is one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. And Isaiah 11, verse three, if you want to check up on it, it is what Jesus delighted in. So, it actually says, "Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord."

So, it's God's treasure according to Isaiah 33, verse six, that actually gives us the desire. So, if you ever meet people that yeah, I go to church. Yeah, I'm a Christian. They have no joy in their life. Why don't they have any joy? Because they don't have the fear of God. You can be a Christian and not have the fear of the Lord. They have no joy in their life because they don't walk in the fear of the Lord. The person who fears the Lord is working in them not only the ability to obey him but the desire to obey him. So, now obeying God's commands become my delight, it is not drudgery, it is not out of compulsion, it is not out of the fact that I *have* to obey God. I get to obey God because there is a desire to do it.

RANDY: Okay. Boy! There is a lot there. [Laughing] You know, part of the issue that I think a lot of people have, and I know a lot of the churches foster this, is what I call a "New Testament legalism." Don't do this. Don't touch this. Don't taste that, the scripture says. I hate it. I kind of rebelled against it --

JOHN: God hates it too. So, you're in good company.

RANDY: When you just have that perspective, you can be a little rebellious. Here is the realization, and I think, tell me if I'm wrong, this is what you're leading to. Because okay, I grew up in Texas. We have rattlesnakes, especially down in south Texas. They have festivals where they round them up and put them in a pit and you can go see it. Do you want to get in that pit?

JOHN: No way!

RANDY: No way! And is it because there is a sign that says, "Don't get in this pit!" No, it is because you have a healthy fear. Right? I don't want to sin not because someone says don't do that, but because I've developed, I think somewhat of a healthy fear of the Lord. In other words, why would I want to do that? Why would I get in the --

JOHN: Why would you want to separate yourself from life itself? Why would you want to --

RANDY: It doesn't make sense.

JOHN: It doesn't. It doesn't at all. You know, Randy, it's a really sad thing because the Bible says the strength of sin is the law. In other words, sin gets its strength from the law. What's the law? I have to not I get to. If you look at Balaam, Balaam said, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God to do less or more to the people that came from Midian," who offered him a lot of money to come and curse Israel. Said, "I can't." He didn't say, "I will not." He said, "I cannot." He's being restrained by the word of the Lord.

So how many people are out there that the word of the Lord is their restraint, not their delight? Why do they feel like the Word of God restrains them from the good life, the fun life? It is because their desires are warped because they don't have the holy fear of God in them that gives them the delight of his word and his ways.

RANDY: Because the Bible also says as law evil may never be. Law has a function. But it is for evil people. Right? And when you have the fear of the Lord, you're not bound in the sense by the law because you're bound by --

JOHN: They're written on the tablet of your heart. Now you have this desire. It is a joy. And so, I just believe the reason Jesus delighted in it is because what the Father asked him to do, think about it, it was the most brutal gruesome death a human being could live through. He was so

brutally tortured. Yet who for the joy set before him endured it.

So, there is a joy in there that is produced by the fear of the Lord. This is the missing thing. People are like, I wish I had more joy in my life. Check up on your level of your holy fear of God.

RANDY: How do I do that?

JOHN: How do you do that? Well, there is two ways the fear of God is assimilated into a person's life. The Psalmist in Psalm 34 says, "Come near children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." So, it has to be taught. 30 million Americans have walked away from the faith in the last 24 years. I found this out two years ago. This was a really an in-depth study that Barna has done. There is a group of businessmen that funded it and said, "We want the truth. What is the state of the western church?"

30 million Americans, which is one out of every ten Americans have walked away from the faith in the last 24 years. It caused me to hit my face. I said, God, what is going on? We're losing a million people a year! That's when God opened my eyes. It is because in the western church we haven't taught the fear of the Lord.

See if you look at Psalm 19, verse nine, it says, "The fear of the Lord is clean." It cleans you were from the inside out. "The fear of the Lord is clean enduring forever." So, in other words, this is what the Holy Spirit spoke to me. I'm in a hotel room in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and the Holy Spirit said, "Son, I want you to read Psalm 19." I heard it. I went over and I started reading. I got to that verse, verse nine and it says, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever." The Holy Spirit said to me, "Lucifer led worship, son, right before my very throne. He beheld my glory." Think about it. What put Isaiah on his face and crying out, oh whoa! I realize who this wonderful God is I'm serving. Lucifer beheld his glory, but he didn't fear God, he didn't endure in heaven forever.

Then the Lord said, "A third of the angels surrounded my throne. They didn't fear me. They

didn't endure in heaven forever." So, remember a third of the angels fell from heaven in Revelations 12? Okay.

He said, "Adam and Eve walked in the presence of my glory in the garden. They didn't fear me. They didn't endure forever." He said, "The fear of the Lord." He showed me that day, "The fear of the Lord is what keeps us from walking away from God."

And I'll never forget when I'm sitting in the federal penitentiary with the man who had the largest ministry in the world in the 1980s, but he was arrested. CNN covered his trial every single night. Then he's sentenced to five years. He read a book that I wrote in prison. He asked if I would come see him. I remember when I sat down with him, Randy, he said, "John, this prison wasn't God's judgment on my life, it was his mercy." I went, "What?" He said, "John, if I'd continued living the way I was living with the largest ministry in the world I would have ended up in hell." Everybody would have thought he's the most influential man. He said, "I would have ended up in hell forever."

I'm like this. I listened to his whole story. Now, here I am, 35 years old, he's in his upper 50s and I go, "When did you fall out of love with Jesus?" "No." "Wait, wait, wait! You committed adultery in 1983. You were arrested for mail fraud in 1989. You were sentenced. You got seven years. You just told me you were walking in pure wickedness. What do you mean you loved Jesus?" He said, "John, I loved him." He looked at me with the most tender face. He said, "I loved him all the way through it." And he sees I'm totally confused, and he said, "I didn't fear God." I went, "What?" He said, "John, there is millions of Americans who attend church. They love Jesus. They don't fear God."

And I realized when I walked out that day, the love of God keeps us from the ditch of legalism. God hates legalism. It keeps people from him. But the fear of the Lord is on the other side of the road, it keeps us from the ditch of lawlessness.

RANDY: You know who else didn't have the fear of God and I find this very interesting. The people who will saw the plaques in Egypt, set them free from slavery, saw the Red Sea part, saw

the chariots drowned, were fed manna daily, saw a pillar of fire by night -- cloud by day, fire by night, and still built an idol of worship. Was it Baal? And go --

JOHN: Randy, I have not thought of it the way you just said it.

RANDY: The way we look for miracles or God move -- God show up. That doesn't do it. Look at Jesus. People saw the miracles Jesus did and still didn't believe. There is something missing in our theology and I think this is it.

JOHN: Well, I know this. I look at Psalm 112 and I look at how he starts out and he says, "How happy..." And I look at all the benefits that come, "His children will be mighty on the earth, he will live in security, he will not fear bad news." Jesus said men's hearts are going to faint when they hear what's coming on the earth. They're going to fail them. I don't believe they're going to die of heart attacks. It is just right now people are really struggling. They're so fearful. They're so afraid.

RANDY: Anxiety is through the charts.

JOHN: When you walk in the fear of the Lord, bad news doesn't even phase you.

RANDY: Okay. We've got a couple minutes but there is a story because you talk about the fear of man. And the fear of situations, the fear of the unknown; we can deal with some of these in another program. But there's a story that happened down in Monterey, Mexico that I love that we didn't get to touch on last time where they basically said, "You can't preach here."

JOHN: Oh, you remember that! That's in the *Everyday Courage* book.

JOHN: Is that in the *Everyday Courage*? Okay, so that's why I didn't hear it when we talked about *The Awe of God* last time.

JOHN: So, I'm in Monterey, Mexico and it's going to be an evangelistic outreach in the largest

auditorium in downtown Monterey, which is a very big city. The pastor who was putting it on advertised it in the newspaper. Now, this is back in the 1980s. We were going to this auditorium, I'm so excited. I'm praying all day, preparing for it.

And there is a guy that comes in right before the meeting starts with two armed soldiers beside him. He calls the pastor over and I see, boy, he's not talking very nice to that pastor. Well, the pastor comes over and says, "John, you're not going to be able to preach. You just can't preach." I said "What?" He said, "He's a high-ranking officer in the government and there is a fine law that says you can't preach the gospel in Mexico unless you're a Mexican citizen." He said, "They never enforce it but he's choosing to." And I said, "Well, pastor, I don't want to get you and your church in a lot of trouble. So I'll do what you tell me to. But I want you to know I'm willing to go up on that platform and still preach. I didn't fly down here not to preach." He said, "John, I think it could really have some serious repercussions on our church."

So, I remember the man came over and talked with me with his two armed soldiers. He said, "I will tell you one sentence. You will speak to these people about nothing except tourist-related activities."

I walked outside of that place and there was a flagpole. I started walking around the flagpole just praying like crazy. I thought, I don't care what people think about me. They're just going to think I'm a crazy foreign guy. All of the sudden I hear inside, "Go back in and tell them about the greatest tourist that's ever visited Mexico, Jesus. Put your Bible away and tell them about Jesus."

So, I go back in, so excited. And he's already up there. I'm like, gosh, how I do this? Now, I know God told me to come back in. Then all of the sudden his wife, I'm in the back of this big auditorium, and his wife says, "He's calling for you." So, I'm walking up and it's just a massive crowd. I said, "What do you want me to do?" He goes, "You obey God." I said, "Okay!" So, I said, "Hey, I was just told by this officer I can't talk to you about anything but tourist-related activities. I want to tell you about the greatest tourist that's ever come to Mexico, Jesus!" I started preaching the cross, the resurrection. Right?

RANDY: What happened?

JOHN: So, I gave the call for people to be saved. Right? I mean a mob came down. And there is a crippled man, and the Lord said, "That's the first man I want to heal." So, I go pray for this guy. I said, "Drop your crutch." He starts walking. And then he and I started running back and forth. Well, the place goes insane. Now, people are being asked, they come running down. A deaf woman gets her ear opened up. She literally -- I watched tears make her light blue blouse go dark blue. This little five-year-old boy gets healed miraculously. It's wonderful!

I get on the plane. I fly home. The pastor flies back up a week later and said, "Here is the front page of the Monterey newspaper." It said the government said you were a swindler taking money out of the country. The reporters were there. I saw them, because I saw cameras. They said, "We saw people getting genuinely healed."

The pastor puts the paper down and he said, "John, can I tell you what really happened?" I said, "What happened?" He said, "The officer sent two unarmed men back to arrest you if you preached. They came to arrest you. One of our ushers heard them. When you started praying for the crippled man, they said, 'Do you think this is real?' The other guy goes, 'I don't know. Let's move up closer and see.'" He said, "When they saw the five-year-old boy get healed, the one looked at the other and said, 'This is real.' And the two men that came to arrest you ended up coming to you and asking you to lead them in a prayer to receive Jesus."

RANDY: That's it! That's it! That right there is fearing God more than you fear man. The fear of the Lord drives out every other fear and God shows up.

JOHN: He's so faithful.

RANDY: In discernment.

JOHN: You have to have discernment. The fear of the Lord gives you wisdom.

RANDY: That's exactly right! You have to have it. Okay. John is going to come back on another program and we're going to talk --

JOHN: I'm like family around here. You can't get rid of me.

RANDY: I don't want to because there are so many things in *Everyday Courage* that I really want to talk to you. I want to tell people if you want to request *Everyday Courage* by John Bevere, do that. I'd love to send it to you. Of course, you can get *The Awe of God* wherever you get your books.

But here's the situation because we've been in a lot of places where we've been told you can only do certain things. But the discernment, the compassion, the need, it's out there. I want you to get a little glimpse of someone who, maybe like you, has seen it but not experienced it. Just so you hear her heart because this is the heart of what we do, the ministry in word and deed. Watch this.

Transition Roll-in:

ASHTON: On my first day here in Benguela, we decided to go and visit the Benguelan malnutrition clinic. Prior to this trip, I thought I was prepared to see these things. I've watched James and Betty on TV. I've been in their studio. I've seen the videos, I've heard the stories so I can handle this.

But when I stepped in, there was a child on every single bed. They're skin and bones. Some of them have sores on their mouths. They've got that tint of orange hair that you often see in malnourished children. Some of them -- it was joyful to see because some of them were drinking that milk and eating that peanut butter mix that the team provided for them. You could tell that they were gaining weight.

But then there were others. There was this little girl named Maria. And just to lay eyes on her broke my heart. As I laid my hand on her leg, I remember how small it was. It was taking every bit of energy she had just to sit up. But this is the condition.

Coming here and meeting the moms, meeting the babies, holding their children, these aren't just stories, they're real people -- real children. It's completely different when you're here and you hold their hands. You ask them the questions and they share their sorrows with you, facing tragedy and suffering every single day.

The goal here is to give these people a lifeline so that they can build themselves up, they can have enough food. Their desire isn't for a handout but a hand up. We need your help.

Studio Appeal:

RANDY: I know those pictures are hard to look at. There are networks that won't let us air that. There are social media platforms that have removed some of our videos to show you how hard that is. But we need you to understand the reality out there.

When you get there and you see it and you really get it in your soul, it is an easy thing to want to help. That's why we want you to understand the need because you need to understand the power of your participation.

John, I know you've been over there. It changes when you're on the ground.

JOHN: Yeah. I think what really did it for me is when we were running out of food, and I saw the desperation in those kids. It happened and we had nothing to give them. We were way out in the middle of nowhere. These are human beings; these are real people.

RANDY: They're God's creation.

JOHN: I love what *Life Today* is doing.

RANDY: I appreciate your heart because I know it's genuine. There is a lot of good things in this world, there are a lot of good causes but I'm talking about a God cause here. Remember the poor.

Remember the poor! Visit those who are in distress, those who are hungry. This is -- it is so simple.

Let me break it down for you on a practical level just so you know. Not all of you can go. You don't want to go. But you can't go, that's the thing. You can go in the name of Jesus because we don't go anywhere where we don't proclaim Jesus Christ. This is how we do it. This is how you participate: \$30 will basically feed three children for the next three months. How do you do that? Well, it is because we have people in place. We have the whole chain in place to get the food to the most desperate situations. And if they get to where they're self-sufficient, they're good, malnutrition isn't an issue, we go to another place where there is great need.

We're not going to outpace the need here, but we are only going to do as much as you enable us to do. Maybe you can give \$50 and feed five children for the next three months. \$100 will feed ten. Many of you can give \$1,000 to feed 100 children, maybe more!

By the way, this is the last week we'll be on the air with this outreach. But the need will continue and as many of you plan the end-of-the-year giving, this is a wonderful place. I pray that you will consider putting it right here because Mission Feeding works. Mission Feeding saves lives. You will be, I know you'll be blessing people, but you will also be demonstrating the love of Jesus in deed. We'll give them the word -- trust me we'll give them the word.

If you want to request John's book, *Everyday Courage*, we'd love to put it in your hands just to build courage in your life. But most of all, we want you to step out with us to proclaim Christ to the world by meeting the most basic needs to people right now. I hope you'll do it and do it today.

Last week Cause spot:

ANNOUNCER: Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition and even death. Extreme drought and famine putting at risk thousands of lives means we must replenish food supplies immediately to keep feeding the 350,000 children and

help reach more people in desperate need.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send the Daily LIFE devotional calendar. This perpetual calendar has 365 days' worth of scriptures and inspirational thoughts to remind you of the rest you can find in God's loving arms.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "The Light of Life" desk lamp. Find comfort and encouragement from Jesus' words in John 8:12 displayed on this stand-alone acrylic gas lamp, perfect for home or office décor as a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

Studio goodbye:

RANDY: Please do make the best gift you can. I mean it is Christmas Eve! We've been given so much. Let's give to others. John will be back for another program. I'm looking forward to it.

JOHN: I am too. Love being with you.

RANDY: It will bless you! So come back. We'll see you again next time on *Life Today!*