



Reading God in 4G LTE

Joe White

So, 17 is a great number. How many of y'all can identify some of these guys. Who is this guy; number 17? He's one of the greatest baseball players that ever lived. Who is it men, older men, really older men. It's Dizzy Dean. What about him, Dallas Cowboys fans? He's number 17. Dandy Don Meredith. He originated Monday Night Football. NASCAR fans, who drives the number 17 car? I know he never wins, but he's number 17, Ricky Stenhouse, Jr. Does anybody know Disney's 17th movie? It was 101 Dalmatians, ladies and gentlemen; 17 is a big number. Who can guess what the 17th state is? It mattered in the election. That's right; it's Ohio. All you young students, who was the 17th president? Not John Kennedy, no. It's Andrew Johnson. On the 17th day of the month, a very famous thing happened. On the 17th day of the month, there was a boat that landed on top of a mountain. The boat was Noah's Ark. Everybody knew that one. The 17th is a great day.

By the way, if you're afraid of the number 17, you are a heptadecaphopiac. Don't be a heptadecaphopiac, Bill O'Reilly would say. I emailed him Friday, by the way, and I told him that. I said, "Don't be a heptadecaphopiac." If you're still whining about the election, don't be a heptadecaphopiac. Seventeen is going to be a great year. God is still in control.

Ten years ago, the Disney's film of the year was Meet the Robinsons, which I slept through. But at the very end, I woke up for a quote from Disney. Here's a 17 quote for you. It said, "Around here, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things because we are curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths." -Walt Disney That is my quote for 2017.

So, 100 years ago... Do you think we've come a way in the last 100 years. One hundred years ago, the number one song of the year, as we declared war on Germany, was *Over there*. And for every veteran in here - I know we are in Branson and this is what we do - thanks for going over there and for doing the things you did over there.

There was another famous song in 1917 and it was *Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here*. And, 100 years ago, the number one movie was *Charlie Chaplin*. He was the star in 1917. And, in 1917, a major hit film was filmed in none other than Hannibal, Missouri. The film was *Tom Sawyer*. The silent version of the film of course. Just 100 years ago, the imagination ran well. Don't you know the theaters were quiet in those days? All you could hear was the popping of the popcorn.

In 1817, the New York Stock Exchange, stockbrokers. In 1717, Disney fans, Black Beard the Pirate, actually seized a French merchant ship and renamed the ship Queen Ann's Revenge, thus inspiring the film *Pirates of the Caribbean*. That's exactly right, Disney fans. In 1617, Disney fans, Pocahontas died, inspiring the film *Pocahontas*. In 1517, Martin Luther hosted The Ninety-Five Theses and thus began the Woodland Hills resolution, the Protestant resolution.

But, of all the things that have changed in the last hundred years, I think the revolution of communication was the most significant. So, communication... In 490 BC, Fadipides, the Athenian athlete, ran from the town Marathon, 26.2 miles, to the City of Athens to announce to the Athenians that we had just beat the Persians and then he died, I think. Is that right, y'all? Has anybody else read the legend of the marathon.

Has anybody ran a marathon? I've ran one. Was yours planned? I didn't plan mine. I woke up one morning at 4:30. I was in Lampe where Kanakuk's teenage camp is. I decided to run to Branson. I had to speak at the Branson Kamp. So, I ran from Lampe to Branson. That's not a smart thing to do if you're not in really sharp shape like this old thing is. If it wasn't for the Doberman Pincher at mile 3 and the German Shepherd at mile 13, I would never have made it. I got to Branson at 9:30 in the morning and I died as well.

In 490 BC, communication was just footprints, people taking messages and thus 11 men plus the Apostle Paul took a message just 2,000 years ago, on foot. There was no telegraph, no telephone, no emails and they reached the world. But, communication began to change. In 200 BC, the smoke signal. Homing pigeons... In 1150, people began to tie messages on the feet of pigeons and send them to designated places. By the way, Debbie Jo reminded me that is not the origin of bird message travel. What was the first bird message travel? Noah and the dove. In the 1830, was the first telegraph. In 1836, there was Morris Code. The most famous of being ...---... - SOS. In 1860, the first guy took a letter and put it in the saddle bag of a horse and began to ride across the country with a letter, thus beginning the Pony Express.

In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell came along and invented the telephone. How many of y'all have never used a payphone? You've never put a quarter in and heard it go ching, ching, ching. In 1972, the first email went out, thus inspiring the movie *You've Got Mail*, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

Problems... In 2007, along comes the iPhone that I can never find, so I stick it in my back pocket. You have problems with these things. Do you know what the problem is? You can't remember anyone's number. How many of you old people like me can remember your childhood phone number. It's amazing. I still remember my friends' numbers. I can't tell you my children's numbers or anybody's number. Another problem with these things is you can't find them. Is anybody else just completely ADHD like me? You cannot find this thing. You spend half your days looking for your iPhone. I'm talking on mine and I lose it. This has happened twice with my children. I'm going, "Jamie, I cannot find the phone." "Dad, look in your right hand." "Ah, thank you so much."

Then there are dropped calls. You're out there and it's the most important message and the call drops. Then you don't know what network to use. How many of y'all get confused. There's AT&T, it's 4G, 3G,

LTE... You look at these commercials and they are so confusing. How many AT&T people out there? Are you happy with it? No? How many Verizon people out there? How many mobile deal... Whatever they are. I can't tell.

But, I'll tell you this. When you live out on JJ Highway and your wife is in her ninth month of labor, you want the fastest, most reliable service possible as you race towards the new Cox Hospital to have a baby. When your son is out in a snow storm and he's sixteen years old, driving for the first time, you don't want the phone call to drop. "Hey, Mom, I need help."

And, boys, when you get to college, all you little entitled high school kids, and you run out of money and you ain't got no food and your laundry stinks, you want a non-drop call, fast service to Mom for help. Moms, your day is coming, trust me; they're going to need you again and you don't want any dropped calls when that day comes.

In 2017, as wild as this wacky world is and with your marriage at stake and your children at stake and your eternity at stake, and single friends, with the peace of God at stake in your heart, you want 4G LTE with Him. There is one place that you want to make sure, Woodland Hills, that there's no dropped calls and that your service is fast and sure, and that's with Him.

And the G stands for grounded. I want to tell you that there is a hunger around this world for God's Word to be grounded in your heart. I get to take that word around this world. Teddy takes it out and Adam takes it out and Shay takes it out and we love taking the Woodland Hills experience... Matt Gumm is out this week with R.P. at a conference, taking the word of Woodland Hills, the cross of Christ to the world. I see an incredible hunger as I travel across America and other places in the world with men, with women, with students. People want to know that their faith is grounded.

I get in the weirdest places sometimes with that cross and with the word. I wish you could travel with me sometimes to see the things that I get to see. Strange places like, Green Bay fans, the Dallas Cowboys. So, I'm with the Cowboys this fall at the Philadelphia game. You should have seen that team come up to the cross, caring more about LTE with God than LTE with their coach. You should have seen the 20 to 30 players wanting a big daddy hug as they committed their lives publicly to follow Christ for a lifetime.

Do you know what grounded means in scripture? Grounded means faith and grounded means first loyalty. I'll tell you what it means. I'm at another cowboy game and I'm sitting up there in the nosebleed section, watching a friend out on the field. There are guys up there drinking just a hair too much and they are a little obnoxious. I have a young friend with me. I look down in front of me about four rows down and there is a little kid sitting by himself. He's a darling little African American kid. So, I go down there four rows, crawl over the seats with my friend and I sit down by this young man.

I say, "Hey, is it okay if we sit here?"

This kid was a cowboy fan. With his arms crossed, he says, "Mmhum." This kid doesn't miss a scene on that field in front of him. He is a Cowboy lover.

I say, "Are you a Cowboy fan?"

"Mmhmm."

I say, "Do you come to all the games?"

"Mmhmm."

I say, "Oh, well, great! It's great to meet you. Do you ever get hungry at these ballgames?"

"Mmhmm."

I say, "Well, are you hungry now by chance?"

"Mmhmm."

"Well, how about I go get some M&Ms and we'll share? Do you like M&Ms?"

"Mmhmm."

"Great, I'm going to go get some M&Ms." So, I take off and get the biggest bag of M&Ms; it was \$10.99 I'm sure at the football park. I come back, open the M&Ms.

He says, "I only eat the blue ones. Green and yellow are Green Bay; we don't eat those. Red is Tampa Bay and Kansas City; we don't eat those. Orange are those pitiful Denver Broncos; we don't eat those for sure." The kid is loyal! The kid loves the Cowboys so much, he's eating nothing but the blue ones. That is what grounded is all about.

When God becomes your roadmap... Now boys, I know you don't need a roadmap if you're like me. You always know where you're going, right? We don't look at maps. When we're out on a lonely road, lost as we can be... my wife will attest... My wife is a professional backseat driver; she's like the best in the world, and it's really irritating. But I always know where I am. I'm just touring, right, boys? We're on a tour. We're taking the long way around on purpose, right? Well when God's word becomes your Siri, when it becomes your map, when it becomes your GPS, when God's word becomes the Maker's Manufacturers Instruction Manual like what will fix anything in your car, that's when you're grounded.

A little kid named Josiah... I was reading about him this week. He's a little eight-year-old kid. His culture was a mess, just like the culture we live in today. Just like the workplace that you perhaps live in today. Maybe just like the family you live in today. That little kid, at age eight, young men, restored the Book of the Law. If you want to be like Jesus, learn your Bible more than you learn anything else in your life. And he did that at age eight. He changed a nation. Men, it's said his heart was tender (2 Chronicles 34:27).

I love to meet a man with a tender heart. I'm around athletes, I'm a coach, and I love to meet these giant players. When they're on the field, they're ferocious, but off the field, our heart is tender towards our wife, towards our children, towards our friends. It is said he humbled himself before the Lord. I love to meet these godly ladies like Mrs. Katie Gumm and others I get to meet and my little bride that humble themselves before the Lord. It says he made a covenant to keep God's Word, his testimonies, his statutes with all of his heart, with all of his mind, and with all of his soul, and it changed a nation.

You could change your family like that. One kid could change a family. One spouse can change a marriage. One who makes a covenant to be grounded in God's word. They only eat the blue ones. Television has a lot of ideas, right? Your boyfriend, girls, has a lot of ideas of how to use your body. Social media has a lot of ideas. Politically correct thinking has a lot of ideas about your sexuality. Your iPhone has a lot of ideas that will tempt you and ruin your eyes with pornography, but when you only eat the blue ones, fellows of all ages... Ladies, when you filter through all the trash and all the ideas and you only eat the blue ones, ask "What is God saying about this? What's God's idea about that? Make me like Jesus." You're going to be grounded, you're going to have 4G with God.

G is for graceful. Do you know what G is in a family? Wherever you are in a family: grandparent, child, adult, parent, brother, sister, graceful is loving with your arms spread open. Graceful is finding some nails and taking your pride and letting it just get nailed to a cross, taking your ego and your way and taking your sexual urges and nailing them to the cross.

As he's up there on that cross, he's teaching you how to be graceful. Of course, he takes care of Barabbas. He had never met the guy before. Barabbas is me, Barabbas is you; he deserves to die. Jesus said, "No, I'll take that hit for that man. I'll do that for him. He can go free." Then he takes care of the thief on the cross, the beggar up there... me. The guy who doesn't stand a chance with God, as lost as is imaginable, he adopts that guy. Then he takes care of his mom. Young men, he takes care of his mom. You be good to your mom and you'll be a man someday. You spoil your mom. He takes care of his mom.

And then he's crucified on the cross and he's up there telling John to take care of his mom. And then he takes care of his child in the faith, parents. He takes care of John. "Mom, you take care of John." And then he takes care of you. When he calls out for the ones who are nailing him to the cross on the night you and I betrayed him, the day you and I have done the worse things we've ever done in our life and we've been living in shame, he takes care of the shame and he takes care of the guilt and he cries out, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing." You can change a nation. You can change your family when you live gracefully.

Let me give you a picture you will never forget as long as you live. If you want to know what it means to be graceful, take your white piece of paper you've got in your hand, that cardstock, and take your black pen... If you want to get a picture this morning to start 2017 to be a graceful guy, to be a graceful woman, take a picture of your hand. Some of y'all may want to freehand it. Some of y'all that are artistically challenged like me, just trace your hand. With your palm up, by the way. Not palm down, but palm up. I'm not into palm reading, but notice the wrinkles as you draw. Those precious little

wrinkles in your fingers, notice them and draw them. As you are woven together in your mother's womb, God began to write those wrinkles in your little fingers out there. Before you were even born, you were living and those wrinkles began to form. Then notice the calluses. The first time you held a hammer. The first time you held a tennis racket. The first time you grabbed a broom for your mom or dad. Notice the calluses. And then notice the palm where you made your first catch when you and your dad first played catch together when you were a boy. Or maybe you had a coach who loved you like that. Your hand actually has a lot of history.

Now take your red pen. If you want to really give grace; if you really want to be a graceful guy or graceful lady, draw a red hole in the middle of your palm. Not a clean hole, but a gaping red hole as if someone has just wounded your palm. And then pick up your black pen again and draw a spike. Not a 16 penny American nail, but a blacksmith's spike – big, rugged, flesh-tearing. Draw that spike into the hole in your hand and then picture it on a cross and look at your wife and say, "I've been crucified with Christ. It's not about me anymore." Look at your husband and say, "It's not about me. I nailed my anger and my hatred to the cross." Look at your parents. Some of y'all are still blaming your parents for things that happened so long ago. Look at them and say, "It's not about me anymore. I forgive. I want to love you like that."

4 G is graceful. And, men and women, 4G is grateful. Do you know what gratefulness is? Grateful is courage with a great attitude. Chief fans, just to let you know that my loyalties are not all in Dallas, I get to speak to the Chiefs football team from time to time. I was there a year ago. They had lost five game straight. Something happened after the Chicago game that I was at. They won 10 straight games and went to the playoffs. They came out this year fighting like hornets. And they are going to play football again today because of one guy.

I'm doing this chapel service and in the front row is a player. He's a bald-headed guy. In fact, his eyelashes are bald. In fact, his whole body is bald because he's just been through months of chemotherapy. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is some of the deadliest cells of all cancer cells. He had been walking through lymphoma and walking through chemotherapy, but he was a fighter. He was grateful, he was courageous, he never lost his attitude, he was always thankful as 1Thessalonians 5: 18 says. Thankful in all circumstances.

He wears number 29 and he'll be out there tonight and you'll be watching that kid all over the field, making tackles and intercepting balls. It was this guy. He had one hair on his chin. His name is Eric Berry. He sitting on the front row of that chapel that I was doing. He was grateful for one hair on his chin. Do you think you don't have anything to be thankful for? He had one hair on his chin. They called him "one haired chin" or something like that. His attitude was so stellar that he changed a whole team and now they're in the playoffs because of number 29 who was grateful in the worst circumstance of all.

Then finally, you're grounded, you're grafted. The prettiest wedding I ever did... I've been able to do my children's weddings and they were beautiful and I've done weddings all over this country and people spend a lot of money on weddings. This wedding cost \$100.00. Her name was Candy. Little Candy was a kitchen staff helper at the teenage camp. She had been washing dishes for several summers. She did a great job leading girls. She was actually the discipleship leader for our little kitchie group.

A little boy fell in love with Candy. No one was surprised; who wouldn't love Candy, the godliest girl in camp. Candy had \$100.00; she was very poor. He asked her if he could marry her. She said, "I need to sit by my grandma until she dies." For three years, Candy sat next to her grandma's side until her grandma passed away. And then she turned to her fiancé and she said, "Now I can marry you."

She had \$100.00. She went to a rummage sale and bought a throw away wedding dress. She spent three months sewing fake pearls all over this dress. She took it to the cleaners and spent her \$100.00 on the dress and the cleaners. She shows up at the wedding at our little K-2 outdoor church. It's 85 to 100 feet up, overlooking Table Rock Lake, looking up the Big Indian Creek arm of Table Rock Lake with Trace Hollow over here and little Indian Creek Hollow over here. It's this beautiful place where our camp is.

As Candy walks in - there's no photographer, no flowers, no reception – the winds blew lightly. Our church is full of these little sugar maples, the ones with the orange and gold and red and yellow leaves. The leaves begin to fall all around her and all around her feet, these star shaped maple leaves fall at her feet as she walks in. It is stunning. Her fiancé loses it. I lost it. In fact, I lose it so bad, I forget to pronounce them man and wife. I had never done that before. I forget the kiss. They are on their way out and I thought I'd better pray really fast as they leave. "God, as the groom kisses the bride and as I pronounce them man and wife, please place your blessing on this wedding." It was stunning.

That wedding is your life and you're one of the leaves. Cling as hard as you can to the vine of life. Men and women, he calls himself Jesus. He has all the nourishment, he has all the answers, he has all the personality that you want growing up. And the winds blow and it is a wild world we live in. When the winds blow and they're like turbulent hurricane winds... For me, 2016 was a hurricane and that little leaf was hanging onto that vine with everything that leaf had as I was going over the edge as many of you have and all of you will. But by God's grace, that little leaf was clinging to that vine because Jesus said, "If you don't abide in me, you're taken away from the branch and you dry up and you're thrown into the fire and you're burned. But if you abide in me and my words abide in you, if you're grafted in, ask whatever you wish, dream your dreams." Purity and no shame, no regrets, no anger, no fear, no worry; 2017 is the year of 4G if your grafted in.

So, as the band sings this last hymn, don't you dare leave this place and don't stand up until you're ready to say, "Jesus, I want to be grafted into the vine. I want 4G this year, all of it. And I want to graft in my soul."

If you haven't grafted in with your soul... It happens one time where you sincerely give him everything you've got. You give him your heart. And if you want to be grafted in with your heart, instead of being your fourth love or fifth love, he becomes your first love. He's your Siri. He's your map. He's your first voice. If you'll be grafted in with your mind, filter through the M&Ms, Woodland Hills. Filter through all of that advice of the world and this year, eat the blue ones.

So, if you want to be grafted, heart, mind, and soul, whenever you're ready during the song, all by yourself, just stand. If you want to raise your hand up and say, "God, here's my heart, here's my mind, and here's my soul; I'm yours," 2017 is your year.

Father God, please captivate this moment for a lost man, for an angry woman, for a searching child, for a couple in a relationship where they are about to cross barriers they shouldn't cross, for a relationship that wants to be cleaned up and live in purity and honor to a marriage, for a man who has been living in guilt and shame because of the affair or because of the pornographic addiction, for the one who wants freedom, please make this moment all yours, Jesus. Please, Holy Spirit, make it all yours. And thanks for dying to save our souls. It's in your name we pray.