

## Fresh Faith

Episode 8: Show Notes

Season: 2

[Ron Moore](#)

[Maria Stockman](#)

Ryan Middleton

Denise Middleton



### Bullet Point Take Aways:

- Ryan grew up with no real church experiences
- Denise was also unchurched for most of her childhood. Christmas Eve kind of attendance.
- Uncle introduced her to a Baptist Church and around 7th grade she was saved. Went to church without parents.
- Once high school hit, she fell away from that
- Ryan's dad was an alcoholic and it was pretty extreme.
- Not a normal functioning family. Parents separated the summer he turned 9, and came back, then the following year they left.
- As a family they made the decision to leave their dad.
- Ryan always sought a male role model. Grandfather was a really big role model and he passed away when Ryan was 11.
- Ryan's view of God was that Ryan would be atheist and as he got older it was more agnostic.
- Denise felt like her relationship with God was based on her selfish needs. More fear of God versus the loving God.
  
- Were you looking for a godly man?
  
- Denise - no. But once we started our family it really became something that I wanted. But still more of a this is a good moral thing to do.
  
- One day, Denise says we have to go to church and Ryan says ... ok then go do it! That's you, not me.
  
- Ryan's friend, John Schell has been inviting him to come to TBC and to the Men's a Thanksgiving breakfast for years. He kept at it.
  
- Denise is 7.5 months pregnant with second child and Ryan hears a scream.

- Denise is in the bathroom, bleeding very badly. She thought her water had broken but it was blood. Rush her to the hospital.
- Denise is convinced that they had lost the baby while on the way to the hospital.
- Take her into the maternity wing and they can't find the heartbeat. Finally find the heartbeat. Ryan went to move the car and then the nurses say that the heartbeat was Denise's not the babies. They eventually find it and took her into surgery for a c section.
- At 12:04 a.m., Ryan hears a cry and it's the greatest noise they ever heard.
- She was 6 weeks pre-mature and relatively healthy. She didn't need anything extra. 4lbs 7 oz Madison Rae
- October 4, 2008
- When the nurses from the night Maddison was born came in for their shift the next evening they were talking to them. One nurse said, did anyone talk to you about what happened?
- Nurse said: "Someone was looking after your daughter because she shouldn't be ok"
- There was an 85% abruption and there shouldn't have been enough there to sustain life so we were planning to life light her to Children's and we didn't think she would make it.
- Ryan, not being a spiritual person just thought, wow, we're lucky.
- John Schell says, "it has nothing to do with luck"
- Remember this moment very clearly that this is a moment that God was revealing Himself to Ryan.

— break —

- Would you say this is the breaking point for you?
- In hindsight yes, but there was a lot of things that happened in the months leading up to this.
- "God was working in my life but I didn't recognize that quiet yet."
- Ryan was going home to get Austin in hopes for some normalcy for him. It stuck with Ryan what the nurse said about someone watching over Madison.

- Ryan laid down and fell asleep on the couch, woke up in a dream. He was in his bedroom and at the foot of the bed was Jesus. Jesus says is there anything else I need to do to show myself to you.
- Ryan immediately wakes up and is in the living room.
- As a non-Christian, this was something Ryan was hesitant to tell Denise.
- Thinking I can't tell her, but knew I was going to. Denise is in a rocking chair and Maddison was in the incubator.
- Ryan says you won't believe the dream I had last night and Denise starts crying as Ryan tells her. She said, last night at about 8:45 pm I prayed to God about who was looking out for her. It was crazy because all the timing was right and it was so comforting.
- This moment made Denise even more hopeful that they would start going to church.
- Ryan, what did you feel? Enough to let her know about it but still dismissive.
- John asked about the breakfast so Ryan decided to go to appease John. It was ok, nothing crazy. Then went into the worship center and remember thinking wow this isn't what church looks like.
- The message is super relevant to me (Ryan). Very different church experiences.
- Heard a gospel presentation and it was the first time I ever heard it. It didn't sound as far-fetched as I had once placed it.
- As I grew in my faith I became so passionate about sharing the gospel because I knew some people just hadn't heard about Jesus.
- Ryan started attending church the next day and started going every Sunday after.
- Not saved yet, but very intrigued.
- Denise - hasn't experienced what Ryan was talking about so I wanted to go, too.
- Building up hope for the long term for the family.
- Ryan - felt like the messages were so personal and relevant to today. This isn't some archaic book, this is real. It's not a way to police people.
- Once I heard this relevant info teaching that directly affected my life, it was awesome.
- There wasn't a moment that I wanted to trust in Christ,

- Sunday, December 28 went to church and when I came home I said to Denise, I gotta get my own bible.
- I need to get one now, today. So we went to Barnes and Noble and found the religion section and that day he got his first Bible.
- That night, went home and went to bed. Maddison has suddenly passed away in the night.
- That was chaotic and scary and traumatic. The pain. There's just no way to describe it.
- Denise - I can go through that day in slow motion. You never think you will ever have to go through this. The worst feeling. It's hard to even think about it even now.
- Ryan - Numb. Disbelief. This can't really be happening. No. It's not what's supposed to happen.
- Drove to the church and talked to Mike McCormick. Ryan had felt that was where he could go for comfort.
- Ryan - It took a lot of time to process things. You're in disbelief for a long time. But over time, I've come to be so thankful for her. Sometimes I question why we only had her for 80 days, but now I am so thankful for those precious 80 days we had with her that God gave us.
- "You give and take away"
- My heart will choose to say, blessed be your name. That was our choice to still praise God.
- Ron - we had a grandson that just passed away and he only lived for 7 hours and we thank God for those 7 hours. We have to learn to see it that way.
- This was the moment that I knew I was a believer. I was turning to God and I have questions but I knew the gospel was the truth.
- I was never angry with God, but I wanted to understand Him better.
- Ron - 70% of parents that lose a child, the marriage doesn't last. You grieve differently. How did that work for you?

- Denise - in the car and late at night because we didn't want Austin to see the pain. We just jumped straight into everything at church and took every class possible.
- Ryan's mom, sister, and Denise's parents started coming to church and that pulled everyone together and became their source of comfort.
- Many run from God, and God just pulled them in closer. They ran towards Him for their comfort.
- Denise - I could physically feel Jesus wrap his arms around me.
- Ryan - Understanding that men and women grieve differently was helpful to us.
- Denise - You recognize that God has been there all along. Everything worked for our healing and for us to be brought to Him.
- People were so kind and compassionate to them the day that she passed.
- Ryan - the day we buried Mandy, it was such a heavy day. New Year's Eve. I remember thinking I don't know how we can go on.
- Austin was handing out pretzels to everyone and he just lightened the room and made everyone see that they can go on.
- God provided us with everything that we needed to get through it.
- Ron - You measure life not by years but my impact. Maddy had such a huge impact on your family and their faith.
- Everyone has taken dramatic steps towards the Lord on both sides of our family. It's impacted close friends and also people who we aren't close with.
- Ryan - John Schell's huddle Group kind of adopted me and really showed me what it meant to be a man of God.
- It's really how Christian community is supposed to happen.
- March 1 - came to church and Mike McCormick said hey you don't like ok, what's wrong? I said nothing. (8:45am)
- After church, I took Austin to the mall to play. Had this urge to call my dad who I had been estranged from for 15+ years.

- I got my aunt's phone number and called her. She says what leads you to call today.
- Aunt Pat says that his dad passed away earlier this morning (8:45am). I'm beating myself up because I should have called sooner.
- I go home and Austin is throwing those magnetic alphabet letters and when I went to grab them the word "God" is spelled out. I'm questioning myself and feeling so guilty. That was the moment that I had complete peace and I knew that this is how it was supposed to be.
- Denise - through the church had been introduced to other women who had lost a child. I clung to them and their comfort.
- Ryan's new faith had taken off and it inspired me to do the same. I clung to Ryan a lot.
- There was a sense of love and community that we got.
- Ryan - Having people that can relate to you is really key when you walk through that grief and healing.
- In a SIDS support group, Ryan was evangelizing and just energized by being able to tell of what Jesus had done.
- Ron - Talk about ways that people can support those going through a tough time. Help us be better at interacting with those who are hurting.
- We know that on one meant to hurt us.
- The most impactful things that people did weren't words. Just sitting and being there.
- Acknowledge that you don't know what to say but I love you.
- Hugs
- A lot of times we think we have to have the right words or they avoid it because they don't want to remind you. I'm never going to not think about it so that's not an issue.
- It's hurtful to not hear from people. They didn't know how to be there for me, but I needed them.
- We want to talk about her.
- It was hard during the months after when people seemed to move on.