Beni Johnson

Interview with Gabe

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# How they met

Everything you ever wanted to know almost ;)

I’m going to figure out why Gabe hugs his mom that way. That love I want that. Beni sat with him for hours, spent a lot of time just sitting at their house. Helped him through amazing and difficult moments in his life.

We’re going to talk about your sex life first, she said no we’re not going to do that :p The quick version of how they met. Bill did the guy version. Guys really only know, we met, kissed each other and got married. How did it all go down?

She was 16 years old and then she thought the pastor’s kid is kind of cool. He told him that she knew he was the one. Sometimes it is just not true, 6 months in she said we’re going to get married. The families were camping together at Whiskey Town Lake. They were rafting out on the lake. Well God hasn’t told me that yet, I am a little slow. at 17 years old.

Bill broke up with her when he was gone. He sent a dear John letter, we’re separated we should probably see other people. All along I knew one of his old girlfriends were back there. He never dated anybody and came back within 2 months. She knew he would come back, just waited and then went to a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting in Oklahoma. By the time the meeting was over they were holding hands and back together. Sometimes guys need help! They liked each other and got engaged December 18th, 1972. Married in April, next month married for 44 years.

# Early times

What was it like in early times? Pre-Weaverville days? We were the single pastor here, his dad asked him to run the salt house. He was running it with another guy on staff and he said it is all yours. They were doing Bible studies and actually lived in there. The end of the peace era. They got married, finished 3 months in school at Genesis Bible center for 9 months. People counseled us that they shouldn't get married, their best friends pulled them apart and said you're not right for each other. She has a stubborn streak in her and said I don't care hat you say, I am going to marry that boy!

They were in the public arena from the get go. They didn't have a vision, but loved Jesus and followed the Holy Spirit. They did that until Eric was born. They made $25 a week that was their food, gas money everything. They had to depend on the Lord and live by faith. God was always there and provided for them.

# Their relationship

Both have a high S personality, adapt really well and both really quiet. They don't have to talk all the time to be comfortable, communicated with being together in the room. Only fought twice in their life, really strong disagreements no yelling. He was right about both of them. She will choose her wars if she really felt strongly about something. Lots of things where I would just give it to Jesus.

Don’t marry a guy and think you're going to change him. If you change him the way you want him you won’t like him. Jesus, You make Bill the way he is supposed to be.

# How long before you went to Weaverville?

5 years here at the salt house, and then we went there to pastor. Raising kids in a small community was so awesome. Her dream was always to get married and make babies for Jesus. Their front lot was the parking lot of the church. He really appreciated about Bill that he would go to the office every day. He would always go there, whether it was studying or counseling he would always go there. When he would go home he would say I am going home, but not stopping working I will take care of the kids and my wife.

We got paid a little bit more but didn't have a lot. Days without any food. His secretary always knew somehow, she would bring bags with what they needed.

# Schedule

In Weaverville Bill is speaking and traveling a little bit. How do you handle your crazy schedules together?

Bill didn't travel as much when we were in Weaverville, which was nice. But when he did travel I decided to not let that ruin my life. I am very independent and would not be gone a lot. She knew how to handle life and take care of the kids. Wasn't a good housekeeper, she didn't really care a lot about that. Longest time he was gone was 21 days with little kids. That was brutal. She told him you're never going to do that again, he said yes I will never do that again.

When he left I took on the mom and dad role, when he came back I had to step back in the only mom role. She took her place as the wife and mom, now had to step back sometimes so that he could step in his role. I could do it by myself.

# How do you resolve disagreements?

Way they resolved it, he was really upset and voiced his being upset. She thought it was wrong. He took a deep breath and went for a walk. Then she started thinking about everything and he came back and said you're right, I am wrong. Give everyone a break and contemplate the whole scenario.

Some people think arguing is fine, I don't think so. Bill and I don't have the personalities for that. We do disagree about things but are really nice to each other in the process. Be nice! Take a breath, step back and be nice.

How are you different?

Bill is methodical, disciplined and steadfast. He really contemplates making a decision, especially a major one. He is way too slow at it! But when he makes the final decision it is a good one and pretty much life long decision. A month before he proposed to me I thought he was breaking up with me. He was contemplating asking her to marry him and it was scaring him to death. It took him a whole month to work it up. Once he is done he is committed.

I am very spontaneous, I want things done right now. He wants to think about it, all the kids got that spontaneity, he is a slow decision maker. It is really good! But drove me crazy time to time. Way we are the same we’re both quiet. What do you do to pull the plug? Go home, sit on the couch and watch tv. We don’t feel like we need to talk about everything.

She wanted to know what he did at the office, wanted to know everything. Bill couldn't tell her, because of that. now she is like, I don’t want to know, don’t tell me! Now he tells me more than he used to.

# What would you tell people about the call of God on their life?

Obviously you need to have the same ideas and thoughts, one of you a pastor the other a missionary that won’t work. But they both didn't know what they were going to do. They were following the Holy Spirit, didn't know they would end up at a drop in home, or pastor. It was not on their list. They said Holy Spirit wherever you take us I will go. She knew she wanted babies and that would be easy to do.

She couldn't get pregnant when she wanted to, Eric came after 3 years.

# Advice for moms?

Start communicating with them from a very very very young age, they will need you when they get to junior high. Need to have built that communication.

They would bring people into the kitchen table and say ask my mom about sex because she had kept it all open and talked about everything they always knew there was an open door with her. They always knew that they could come to her. They went to almost all their sports games, sitting up in the bleachers and when the game was over both boys came up to her and they put their hands around her and walked her out of the gym. My boys love me and are not afraid to show it in public. As a mom that was a huge reward. They are similar, Lia is a bit more stubborn than me.

Have fun with your kids! They will be gone before you blink! You don’t want to ignore them. You should do fun things together and have much fun doing it!

# Marriage

What did you tell your kids about being married?

I don’t know if we talked as much about it as we showed them. We showed them every day what it looked like, Bill might’ve had a talk with them, but I don’t remember that. Did believe in dating, but had our rules. They were pretty good about obeying those rules

* Don’t hold hands
* Don’t touch each other where you shouldn't teach each other.
* No french kissing

Rules or boundaries make sure people ask you about it, otherwise, it doesn't matter at all.

Eric got married, Brian asked Bill how do they from not being married to now you can do whatever you want. It is pretty easy son. It all comes natural.

When did you start talking to your kids about sex?  Leah was 6 when they start asking questions you need to give answers.

How did you manage dating in your family? We really trusted Leah that she wouldn't do things against the rules, but honestly looking back although she was very mature I still think it was very young. Really strict rules, not alone in the car by herself, or in the house, or any place else where they would be alone. 14 is young! Steffany used to joke about what we’re going to do. Someone is going to pay for out food. They would take Steffany everywhere with them. 3 girls living with them, 3 girls engaged and all had the same rules. They would be outside waiting for them to be home. Sit in nontouching distance waiting. Can your mom please come home? Brian and Jenn, Jenn's parents wouldn't even let them drive in the car alone.

# What should you look for in their spouse?

That they love God more than you. Talked to Beni first for everything, Bill in a good mood and Beni was the keeper of a good mood. Gabe was so white, asking the pastor’s daughter’s hand in marriage. I want to marry your daughter do you have any questions for me? DO you love God more than her? I do! Bill said okay. That's all I need to know. They planned their whole family stuff around the travel schedule. Sometime at dinner, Bill will say I am there, Gabe wants to be busy. Okay to do Christmas at this day? It's fine. :p

# Different rules?

I don’t think so, they were all the same rules. One day before they moved here Leah was in 8th grade in a private school. She would walk to meet the boys and Beni would pick them up. She was concerned about going into high school because of the pressure put upon girls. There was a lot of abuse in the high school. Drove up one day to pick her up and she had her face in his face. She was giving him heck. He kept swearing in front of her, she hit into him. Then I knew she wasn't going to have any problems.

# Grandmother

You're now a grandmother, what is that like?

It’s the best thing ever! One thing about it: you're not a nervous wreck! Especially with the first one, you don’t know what you're doing. You're going to be fine. This too will pass! You will get through this with the kids. As a grandparent you know it is all going to be good. Praying for their grandchildren. You talk a lot about prayer.

# How has prayer influenced your family’s life?

We really believe in scripture, continually and constantly pray. One of her kids was really strong-willed, I've prayed more for him than the others. Her prayer was Jesus you have to take this kid and arrest him. If you don’t he is in trouble. God did and was so faithful in taking care of them. No prayer is ever overlooked by God. Always made it a point at night to pray for the kids. Pray for them always, continually soaked them in prayer. Never remember a day we didn't do that. Taught them the way to go, but also make decisions before moving out. Eric really wanted to make this decision, wasn't bad, but they knew it was a wrong decision. Then he went and they prayed their guts out to want to make that decision. Sometimes you have to be desperately dependent upon the Lord. When they get older you need to surrender. I wanted my kids to go and do before they leave the house.

I wanted my kids to fail while they were at home and succeed while they were at home. Eric is the only one that left the house, but he made the right decisions. He knew what to do, a good guy full of integrity.

2 things: How to cook and to their own laundry.

# Did you have any sense what they were going to do?

We depend upon prophetic words a lot but say your kid gets a word and does something completely different that is fine. Brian was a sophomore and a really good athlete, but one day he came home and said I am done. I am so sick of the hypocrites, he just quit like that. Something he was really good at. He started to hang out with the stoners, he said they are honest. Never took drugs, but he said I can be real with them and they're not fake. He picked up a guitar and started playing 8 hours a day, some music classes and his whole life changed. They got a word about one of them a worship leader, pastor and evangelist. They really thought Eric would go into baseball and that switched as well. Whatever they wanted to become. Guide them through making the decisions in their life. A flower that bloomed in all of them.

Any last minute thing about being a wife that everyone should know?

For me every year has gotten better, her hardest years were in her late 20’s raising her children. She didn't know exactly who I was. There were times where I felt like I needed to be like Bill. She realized I don’t have to be him, I can be like him. I am not your typical pastor’s wife, I don’t play the piano, never been involved with women’s ministry, but have done what I felt.

Bill never forced anything on me, the elders asked him what will your wife be doing? Bill said my wife is my wife and will take care of the kids if she wants to do anything else and God tells her that she can do that. I was not always a prayer warrior! I didn't have a clue before a year being here. She got to walk in her giftings, really thankful for Bill seeing that and not having any pressure.