

# FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

References to conferences, resources, or other special promotions may be obsolete.

## Leaning on the Lord

Guest: Dennis and Barbara Rainey  
From the series: Art of Parenting: What Every Parent Needs (Day 1 of 3)  
Air date: October 29, 2018

---

**Bob:** The demands we face as parents are daily and sometimes urgent demands. Barbara Rainey says, in the midst of that, we've got to keep in mind the long-term perspective of parenting.

**Barbara:** As parents we're so often reactive and we're so often mired in today and the issues of today—whether it's potty training, or lying, or first day of school, or whatever it is—we get really bogged down in the today and it's hard to make ourselves think ahead.

**Bob:** This is *FamilyLife Today*. Our host is Dennis Rainey; I'm Bob Lepine. In parenting, it's important that all of us keep the main thing the main thing. We're going to talk about how we do that as parents today. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us. I don't know if you guys have had this kind of an opportunity. I say you guys because your wife, Barbara, is in the studio with us today. Welcome Barbara.

**Barbara:** Thank you Bob.

**Dennis:** Hi sweetheart.

**Barbara:** Hi.

**Bob:** Have you had the opportunity to sit down with expectant parents who are about to have their first baby and just say "Okay, let me give you the lay of the land." "Let me tell you what's coming."? Have you had parents like that who have said, "Would you just prep us?" We do premarital counseling, but we don't do a whole lot of pre-parenting counseling for first time parents. Have you ever had that opportunity?

**Barbara:** Well I've had a lot of opportunities to talk to young women who are going to have their first baby about the birthing process because that's really front and center in most of their minds. It's "How am I going to get this kid here? How am I going to survive it? How are we going to—"all that stuff at the beginning—feeding and all of that. So that's really where most young women's minds are: how am I going to survive the first six months?

So they don't really think much beyond that, I don't think. I think it's getting the baby here, getting it healthy, learning how to feed it and take care of it—and that's about as far as I think they go mentally.

**Bob:** When I was a young parent, I wasn't thinking much beyond the here and now—the next couple of weeks. I didn't have the big picture in mind. I think for a lot of parents that's just where we live.

**Dennis:** I think it's a time of blissful joy and they really don't know what's ahead for them. I think there is a lot of optimism and may I say it about us—a lot of arrogance. We thought we'd do a better job than our parents would do. It wasn't that we thought we were better people. We just thought we've been better equipped. We've had some great teachers of the Bible. We've had some mentors that have built into our lives and we thought we could do it Bob. I don't think I thought it would be easy, but I thought it was going to be easier than it was. [Laughter]

**Bob:** So today what we're going to do is we're going to do some of this pre-parenting counseling that will hopefully help moms and dads think not so much about labor and delivery. Because they're taking classes for that, right?

**Barbara:** Right.

**Bob:** They're going through sessions on how to breathe and all of this. But we want them to be thinking about the next 18 years with this son or daughter that they are about to have and to come back and say "Okay, what's the big objective here?" And this is one of the things you deal with in the book that you've just written called *The Art of Parenting*. You've got a chapter in here—a section of the book—that's all about what parents need in order to be good parents, and at the center of that they need the right perspective, don't they?

**Dennis:** They do. This first point we'd like to make for parents is *absolutely* essential. It's like gravity. It is—It must be in place in your life / in your marriage / in your family to be successful as a parent. You see what I'm holding.

**Bob:** I do.

**Dennis:** It's a Bible.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Dennis:** We say a dusty Bible will lead to a dirty life. It will also lead to children who are aimless, spiritually, and who don't know who they are and why they were created.

**Barbara:** So the most important thing we believe for every parent is that you must be individually, and then as a couple, dependent on God. Assuming that you know Him—which we're assuming that at this moment—if you know Him, then the most important thing for you to

do is to grow in your relationship with Him so that you can therefore guide your child according to the principles that God has put forth in His scripture.

**Bob:** When you're talking about parents being in God's Word and following God, you're talking about being in there with more purpose and more intentionality than just taking a Bible verse vitamin every morning, right?

**Barbara:** Yes, and I mean more than just going to church on Sunday morning. I think we—and especially when we're young because Dennis and I were this way too—I think we were trying to learn *how* to walk with God.

We didn't really know what that meant. So it was real easy to feel like if we went to church, and we were in a Bible study, or we read our Bible occasionally, that was accomplishing that. There's nothing wrong with any of those things. You have to start there. But I think what we're saying in the book, and what we're saying to you who are listening, is that what you really need is you really need a heart that is surrendered to Christ and is totally dependent on Him. Because as we learned in raising our kids, it wasn't just enough to take our kids to Sunday School. It wasn't just enough to have them memorize a verse here and there. What they really needed is they really needed to see a mom and dad who are completely dependent on Christ as individuals. Not just talking about it because if you just talk about it, your kids are going to rebel. But if they see a mom and dad who are in love with Jesus / who know him / and who are trying to please him with their lives, then that's going to be much more attractive to them. And your whole family is just going to work together better because you're following Christ—not just your mixed-up ideas.

**Bob:** Barbara, I've never talked to a young mom without hearing something like this "Before I had kids, there was margin and space in my life for a quiet time or to go to the women's Bible study or to really get deep. I loved it. I really enjoyed it. After I had kids, margin is gone.

**Barbara:** gone

**Bob:** It's vanished. Getting five minutes in the Bible seems like an impossibility unless I just lock myself in the bathroom for five minutes."

**Barbara:** Well and that doesn't always work because my kids always found me. [Laughter]

**Dennis:** She tried to hide in there.

**Barbara:** Oh, I did, and it didn't work. I remember that so well and I felt exactly the same way. I think now as I look back, one of my regrets is that I didn't fight harder for margin. I think I could have created some margin if I had worked with Dennis on that and if we had made more of a pact and more of a goal for that to happen. It's real easy for moms to become martyrs and to become indispensable because it feeds who we are.

I loved it that my kids needed me. I liked it that they actually wanted me over their dad sometimes. It made me feel important. I liked that. And yet that was in some ways I think a trap to keep me from doing what I needed to do which was to spend time with the Lord. And there were times when I didn't do Bible study, and I didn't have a quiet time. I gave up on it because it was so hard, and I'd rather not try, than try and feel like a failure. So I know that that's normal for moms. But I'm saying on this side of the equation—I'm saying on this side of the line having finished raising my kids—if I had it to do all over again, I would work harder to make sure I had that margin and to protect that in some way in conjunction with my husband. For us to work together to find a way for me to be communing with Christ on a better level.

**Dennis:** And I have a confession to make.

I don't have *tons* of regrets that I wished I'd done but on this one, I did not understand the burden children place on a mother. I grossly underestimated that drain. I wish I'd understood what Barbara just said. Because I wouldn't have been waiting for her to come to me and ask for margin. I would have been looking out for her / saying to her, "What do we need to do for you to nourish your soul and look out for your own heart?" And Bob, I don't think I did that enough. I really don't.

**Barbara:** I think the reason you didn't is the reason most young men didn't, and probably, Bob, you would say the same thing. It is really, really hard for a young man to understand the load and what it means to be a mom. I'm watching it with our daughters and our sons—and their wives. It takes years for a man to fully grasp what it costs her to give birth and to raise these kids and to give her life for the kids.

**Bob:** The physical and emotional toil—

**Barbara:** That's correct.

**Bob:** —that a woman pays. So if a mom and dad in the season of parenting just say "Look, we're overwhelmed. Somethings got to give. We'll get back to the Bible eventually, but for this season we just don't have the margin to do this. We'll keep going to church and we'll still do some things—We're listening to Christian radio." I mean, right now, they're listening to Christian radio so that's got to be worth something. You would say if you neglect the Bible, what's going to happen to your parenting?

**Dennis:** Well, I want to go back to a message that I heard 50 years ago. It just dawned on me; I heard this when I was a junior in college. His name was Dr. Chet Wood. He was a professor at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, AR. He came to a Cru meeting where a bunch of us—Barbara was probably there—and he held up a batch of grapes—plump juicy grapes—that were all held together in a cluster. Then he held up a vine that was withered. There were no grapes on it. All that was left was just the little spindly stems, okay? He held it up and he goes "This is a picture of the Christian life. Jesus said in John 15, 'If you abide in me and my words abide in you,' here's what he said, 'you're going to bear fruit.' Why? Because the word abide means to draw your life's source from. Jesus stands up in John 15, the first 11 verses, and he

says, ‘Abide in me and I in you as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself so neither can you unless you abide in me.’”

So our life’s decisions / our values / the things that are important to us are drawn from this book and it teaches us how to do life God’s way.

**Bob:** Yes. I’m thinking if you want God to be a part of your parenting, then He’s got to be brought into your thinking on a regular basis.

**Dennis:** Well, Bob, in the movie you created, Like Arrows, there’s a time in that movie where the dad confesses to the kids. Do you remember it?

**Barbara:** Yes.

**Bob:** Oh yes, it’s a pivotal point in the movie where the dad says “We’ve learned that the Bible is more significant than we realized. That we need to be in this book every day as a family” and he calls his family back together around it.

**Dennis:** And “this needs to be our center” he said.

**Bob:** Right.

**Dennis:** It hasn’t been. It’s been a part of / over to the side. That’s why I think we start with this one: that you need to have a Bible that isn’t dirty. But a Bible that’s marked up and that has some edges to the pages where you can tell it’s been read more than once. It is your manual to know how to raise children in this generation.

**Bob:** Okay, so we’re sitting with new parents. We’re saying “Here’s what you’re going to need. Number one, don’t let this slip away as you have your kids. Get the margin, fight for it, stay connected, abide in the vine, be in God’s Word.” We got that. What else do parents need?

**Dennis:** Well and one other thing, the Bible will show you what a straight line looks like. Because you’re going to run into a lot of lines as you raise kids—other parents with other values—and the only way you know if a line is crooked is if you know what a straight line looks like. The Bible lays out truth: the ten commandments, the golden rule, all the teachings of Christ, the New Testament. It teaches you as a parent how to live a wise life. We’ll talk more about that in this series later on, but parents today need to know what a truly fruitful, successful, effective family looks like.

**Bob:** Alright, so if you’re in God’s Word, that’s going to give you perspective on—like you’re saying—all the issues that you’re going to face as moms and dads. This is where parents need not just time in the Word, but they need wisdom that comes from being in God’s Word to face the challenges they’re going to face every day.

**Dennis:** That's the second thing parents need. They need to understand the times. When I say that, I'm saying you need to look beyond what's just happening—to see the symptoms / to see the world view of how people are making decisions in their families and in their lives and not get distracted. But you need to have an understanding of the times and you need that wisdom that you were talking about, Bob—wisdom to know how to act and how to lead your family forward.

**Bob:** There's a verse in the Old Testament, Barbara, that talks about the men of Issachar, right?

**Barbara:** Issachar, yes.

**Bob:** They were men who understood the times.

**Barbara:** Yes, and they were really important to David because he had his soldiers. He had his battle lines all drawn up and all the men. But he needed these men because they were wise, and they were looking ahead, and they were thinking ahead. And as parents we're so often reactive and we're so often mired in today and the issues of today—whether it's potty training, or lying, or first day of school, or whatever it is—we get really bogged down in the today and it's hard to make ourselves think ahead. What we're talking about in this one—in the second one—be wise and you get your wisdom from the Bible. It's thinking ahead and looking ahead—watching what are the issues that parents are dealing with who have kids that are maybe five years ahead of you, so you know what's coming and not as caught off guard and not always playing defensive.

**Bob:** So I read an article online—this was a while back but a story about parents who had decided that they're going to raise not babies but “theybies.” Have you heard about “theybies?”

**Barbara:** No, I haven't heard about “theybies.”

**Bob:** “Theybies”—where they're not going to disclose to the child or to anybody else what the child's gender is as they raise that child.

They refer to the child with plural pronouns: they/them rather than him or her. The children know what their anatomy is, but they don't make a gender differentiation and say, “Well you're a boy or you're a girl.” Now I'm thinking about parents understanding the times and knowing how to respond. If you're in God's Word, it's going to help you understand “Okay, that's a novel idea but that runs against what the Bible tells us about God's good gift of gender.”

**Dennis:** Our book, *The Art of Parenting*, really wants to help a parent anticipate these issues we're talking about here and many, many more. It comes as also a part of a package, Bob, the Art of Parenting video series which has a—it's a planning document that is in the shape of an arrow. That arrow is headed toward a target and that's your child.

Your child is like an arrow in the hand of a warrior. I think one of the best things it does is it has two diagrams that show wind. Wind can blow an arrow off target. One of those depictions—it challenges a parent to think of the top one or two things in the next six to 12 months that a parent is going to face with this child. What are the issues your child is going to face? Or maybe they're facing it right now and you just need to address it. Then there's the depiction of wind for 18-24 months / a couple of years out. You're making choices about values.

**Bob:** This is where understanding the times—it makes sense for parents. You've got to know "What are our values and where are our boundaries going to be?" And what kind of things are we going to let happen? I remember when our daughter was in junior high and she went to a sleepover. The next day I said so tell me about last night. She said, "Oh, we went out and went to a park. Met some folks at a park." I said, "Who'd you meet there?" She told me the classmates she met there and I said, "How late were you at the park?" She said, "Oh until about midnight." I said, "Wait, wait, wait. You were at a park until midnight? Were there any parents?" No, no parents—she's in junior high. I got blindsided with that one.

**Dennis:** And what parent hasn't.

**Bob:** Because we didn't stop and think she might go over to some person's family where they go out to parks and stay out til midnight.

**Barbara:** And this was a family you probably knew and trusted.

**Bob:** Yes. And it was just a different set of values. It's where as a mom and dad you've got to sit down and say, okay we can't just play defense, we've got to play offense and we have to think about some of these issues we are going to be facing.

**Dennis:** This is what's cool about *The Art of Parenting* video series. You sit in a living room with four, five or six other couples who are at different phases of raising their kids—some older, some younger—and you are going to hear what some of the issues are as you rub shoulders with others that are doing real life. What I believe the enemy of our souls wants to do is keep us so busy doing things for our kids that we don't have time to pull back and think strategically—how are we going to anticipate these issues that we know they are going to face as they move into adolescence, adulthood and living life on their own.

**Bob:** You've told this story before. Where your daughter went off to get a coke with another young man that was a friend of hers and all of a sudden—

**Dennis:** It was a Christian leader's son.

**Bob:** --and you weren't all that worried about it until—

**Dennis:** I wasn't all that worried until I looked out a window and saw them walking down a path hand in hand. It was like—how old was she Barbara?

**Barbara:** She was 12 or 13—really young.

**Dennis:** It was like, “Hey! Let go of her hand buddy!”

**Barbara:** She was our oldest, so this was our first time to experience this and we were caught off guard.

**Bob:** And you said, she’s on a date! She’s going to get a coke with a guy. That’s a date.

**Barbara:** Yes, a date.

**Dennis:** So it forced us to say, what’s a date? It’s being alone with the opposite sex. It can even be falsified as a friendship—don’t you believe it mom or dad. [laughter]

**Bob:** If it’s the two of them together, it’s a little more than friendship. [laughter]

So let me ask this—What can a mom or a dad do to understand the times? Because just being involved in the household issues that you’re facing with your kids, that’s one thing. But to know what the culture is throwing at them right and left, you have to stay vigilant. I mean, it’s like you have to stay on Facebook and Twitter 24/7 just to see what might be coming their way.

**Barbara:** Well I don’t think it takes that much time. [Laughter]

**Bob:** That might be an exaggeration.

**Barbara:** I think that’s a bit of an exaggeration. But I think you could begin to hang around some of these kids that are older than your kids and see what they talk about, see what they wear, see what they’re thinking, how they act, how do they use their devices, what are their parents letting them do and not letting them do. If you’ve got friends, that’s even better, who have kids that are ahead of your kids too. Talk to them and say what are the issues? But the important thing is just find ways to engage with parents or students—children who are older than yours—to know what they’re actually dealing with.

**Dennis:** I tell you one of the smartest things we did—We did some pretty clumsy things but one of the best things we did was teaching a sixth grade Sunday School class. Not once, not twice, but we taught it for 11 years. Those kids only thought that Mr. and Mrs. Rainey were teaching them. Those kids took us to school. Here’s the lesson for moms and dads everywhere who are listening to us. Your sixth grader / your tenth grader / your senior in high school / all of them know a whole lot more than you ever imagined. A whole lot more than you knew at that same age. Anticipate that and ask them some tough questions.

What have you been looking at? What are friends looking at? What are you battling with? What’s tripping you up? Bob, these are days when parents can’t afford to allow their kids to push them out. Parents have to find a way in—a gentle way—that builds a relationship, and delivers the truth of God’s Word, and compassion for when your child fails.

**Michelle:** FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife. And our goal is to develop godly families and marriages that change the world one home at a time. One of the ways we do that is through this radio broadcast, which is heard in 47 countries and in 4 languages. We also partner with people around the world, people who share our same desire to see strong marriages and families and these people are sharing FamilyLife resources in their countries, maybe that's yours.

We have resources that may be helpful to you. On topics such as forgiveness, finances, honoring your parents and FamilyLife's Art of Parenting. You'll find information about these resources and others at FamilyLife.com. And, you can always email us [global@familylife.com](mailto:global@familylife.com) with any of your questions or concerns.

We'd love to hear from you.

Thanks for listening. Thanks to Larry Loraine, Dennis Leake, Rhonda Street, and our entire broadcast team. We hope you've enjoyed the broadcast and that you'll be back for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

FamilyLife, help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

---

We are so happy to provide these transcripts to you. However, there is a cost to produce them for our website. If you've benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider [donating today](#) to help defray the costs?

Copyright © 2018 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

[www.FamilyLife.com](http://www.FamilyLife.com)