FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

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

Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

Guest:	Lacey Buchanan
From the series:	Through the Eyes of Hope (Day 2 of 2)
Air date:	January 9, 2018

Bob: When Chris and Lacy Buchanan's son Christian was born with no eyes, what followed was stressful for both mom and dad. Ultimately put a strain on their marriage, a strain that had them contemplating throwing in the towel.

Lacey: The biggest thing that I feel like I forgot sometimes in the midst of those moments when we were facing divorce, is how much bigger God was than my problems. I always felt like in those moments, God cannot possibly fix this mess, like our mess was so much bigger than God. How silly is that?

When I was finally able to step back, I could realize God is so much bigger than any mess I make and He loves me enough to help me through it. I feel like a lot of times people look at their marriage there is no way that this can ever be fixed. It's too far gone. God is bigger, He's so much bigger.

This is *FamilyLife Today*. Our host is Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine.

Lacy Buchanan joins us today to share about how God ultimately did a turn-around in her marriage after the birth of her son Christian. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us.

All of us have moments in life where we get on a path that we hadn't anticipated, one we wouldn't have picked for ourselves. But it seems like it's a part of God's design in our lives to put us on a few of those paths, to say, trust Me, I'll get you through this.

Dennis: I'm thinking as you say that, Bob**,** we just—earlier this year celebrated my granddaughter, Molly's, 10th birthday.

For those listeners who haven't had the chance to hear that story, Molly was born to our daughter Rebecca and her husband Jake, and only lived seven days. On her gravestone is a statement we found on a gravestone in England some 12 months before Molly was even born. Here's what it said, just to what Bob's talking about. It says, "We cannot, Lord, thy purpose see, But all is well that's done by Thee."

We can't always see the purposes, we don't know what God's up to, but Bob, as you just said, as you go through life and after you've lived a few decades of life, you're going to go though some seasons of suffering, some serious trials, and we have a guest with us today who has had, I don't want to say your fair share, you may have made up for some other people here Lacy.

Lacy Buchanan who is the author of, *Through the Eyes of Hope,* joins us again on *FamilyLife Today*. Welcome back, Lacy.

Lacey: Thank you.

Dennis: The subtitle of this book is—and this is just a good title—

Bob: I love this sub-title.

Dennis: —just a good sub-title regardless. *Love More, Worry Less, and See God in the Midst of Your Adversity*.

Bob: You've had the chance to put that to practice. You and your husband had been married a couple of years when you found out you were going to have a baby. In the middle of the pregnancy the doctors told you there was a fetal abnormality. Didn't know what that was—an anomaly they said. Later you learned that your son would have a cleft lip and palette.

But it wasn't until he was born that you realized that the cleft lip and palette extended all the way up to his eyes. He was born blind. In fact, the doctors worked in the first few days of his life, to kind of figure out what his condition was. It was on day four that the doctor reported to you. What did he say?

Lacey: My husband was in the room alone with my son. I had stepped out for just a few moments. So the doctor comes in, I'm told, doesn't ask where I'm at, doesn't ask for me to come in so that he can deliver the news to both of us, and sort of walks in to my husband, it's late at night, nine, ten p.m., we've watched our son go through surgery, four-day old child go through surgery earlier that day, we are mentally, physically, emotionally drained at this point.

He walks into my husband and says, "Your son is blind. Sorry", and walks out. By the time I get back to the room my husband is sitting there sobbing. I check on the baby first, has something happened?, what'sgoing on?, is everything okay? And Christian's fine.

That's when my husband tells me what had happened. My first thought was he couldn't even wait until I was back in the room so that we could be together? So he didn't have to—my husband had to sort of take the brunt of that alone, by himself.

Dennis: What were you thinking as your husband was sobbing and was saying he's blind. You had seen his face. That should have dawned on you as well. How did you process that?

Lacey: It was pretty much just devastation at first; we sort of knew by looking at him that he was blind. It was one of those things, we were just holding out until the doctors could tell us something, could confirm something for us. That news and I think so delivered so callously to us, we were overwhelmed with,— immediately overwhelmed with— this four- day old baby, here is the rest of his life we're having to contend with.

Immediately there in that hospital room, his whole life was in front of us. We're thinking what are we going to do? How do we raise a child who's blind? How do we raise a child with these medical needs? What is Christian's quality of life going to be like? because we wanted a good quality of life for this child. I feel like the news of his blindness being delivered so callously it almost felt like as if the doctor was speaking to his quality of life as well.

We took that to heart at first, we were so young, first time parents. There was no manual on parenting we could read ahead of time. We were devastated to know that Christian's condition was this serious, that this is what he was facing and we had no idea what we were going to do about it.

Dennis: Usually when a person or a couple face circumstances like this, there has to be a time as you process through the realities of this and think on down the road where you become angry. Did you get angry?

Lacey: Oh, absolutely!

Dennis: And how long did it take you to begin to express that?

Lacey: Yes! I was angry. There was a time of anger. I think it built up and peaked when Christian was four months old. We had been going to the hospital. He was in the NICU for about a month and it was a really hard NICU stay. He had surgery while he was there.

I was trying to work a full-time job. My husband was working a full-time job. I was going to Law School still in the evenings; I didn't get a break because I had a baby. Here I am trying to get my child to these specialists. He had three to six appointments a week an hour away from our home. I'm trying to balance all of this. I was so overwhelmed. I felt like I was drowning.

When he was three months old he had his second surgery. I was totally and mentally unprepared for it. When he had that surgery it was the hardest surgery he's ever had. I sat in his hospital room and I listened to his monitors beep, and I was waiting for his heart to stop beating after the surgery. It was that bad. I sat there and I just remember

the beeping in my head. Every beat meant a heartbeat. I'm sitting here waiting for it to stop.

I'm talking to God and I'm like, God I can't do this for the rest of my life. I love this child and I want to do whatever I have to do for him. We can't keep going through this. Christian was facing multiple more surgeries. I'm thinking how are we ever going to get through this?

I'm thinking God what are you doing? Why are you putting us through this? I've been going to church my whole life, I was leading Praise and Worship, I've been teaching Sunday School classes, you know! We were doing it right, and this innocent child, what has he done. I was so angry at God.

Dennis: Did you share that anger with Chris? Or was this more of a private shaking your fist?

Lacey: I shared some of it with Chris. I probably—more than telling him how angry I was at God—I was probably lashing out at him as well, taking my frustrations out on him as well. He knew I was angry, for sure. We were both sort of just in a state of limbo. What do we do? Communication wasn't good, I mean, how do you even communicate during this time? We were struggling to even breathe some days, it felt like. So talking was just exerting more energy we didn't even have. So yes, he knew. I don't think we ever sat down and talked about it like we should have, honestly.

Bob: Did all of this drive a wedge in your marriage relationship?

Lacey: It did, it did for a long time, and we both handled it differently too. I was the protective momma bear. I would fight you for my child. I'm going to protect him and the difficulties that I was having. Chris wasn't with me at the doctors because he was having to work. So I was dealing with these doctors who were sometimes less than nice. Here I am already emotionally a mess so my response to them was to start retaliating.

Dennis: Whatever it takes to fix my son. You got to do it.

Lacey: Just do it!! Yes! Just do it and stop being so mean about it! Just do your job. So that built up, too. I was ready to fight. If I need to fight for my child, I will. Chris sort of dealt with it by just burying his head in his work, and he was working as much as he could. For him it was sort of 'out of sight, out of mind", if I'm not around it I don't have to deal with it. It's much easier to step back. He handed it to me.

It was like, you deal with it and I'm going to go work, because I'm still providing for the family, and I'm still taking care of my responsibilities over here. So, I felt abandoned, because I need you to step up, I need your help, I'm drowning here. In his own way, he's over here drowning in his own way. So he's thinking, I can't help you, I can't help myself.

Bob: How did you guys recognize that this was going on? To get to a point and look at each other and say look we got to get on the same page. We got to support each other. How did that process work for you?

Lacey: It took years! Honestly. It wasn't an easy quick fix. I feel like a lot of times it's expected like, oh, you can just pray a couple times and God's going to fix your marriage. God didn't fix our marriage, I think He fixed us!

Bob: Yes!

Lacey: And He's still fixing, not fixing and He's done. He's so not done with us. Yes, it took years of us sort of realizing our own responsibility in damaging our marriage.

We had to step up—it was hard to take responsibility and say I really screwed up right here. I want to reconcile and learning to put ourselves aside. It was sort of selfish on me to expect so much of Chris and it was selfish on him to run. We had to own up and 'fess up to our own selfishness and realize that we've got to die to ourselves here, if we are going to get this right.

Bob: That's an on-going process.

Lacey: It never stops!

Bob: Yes, that's right.

Dennis: I want to make two points here. Number one, men and women process suffering like this differently.

Lacey: Yes!

Dennis: And different isn't wrong, it's just different.

Lacey: Right.

Dennis: And you've got to respect the way the other person is dealing with it. You carried this little boy in your womb for nine months and here's Chris off to the side. He didn't have those conversations with his son like you did, late at night when you said he was doing tumbling acts in your tummy.

A second thing I want to out that your demonstrating here. A lot of marriages don't make it. It's something like 60% of all marriages where there is a death of a child, or the birth of a child with major handicap issues, don't last five years.

Lacey: Right.

Dennis: And you understand uniquely why that's the case. But your covenant, your commitment to each other superseded even your trials at this point. It was your foundation and your trust in God to be able to make it through this as a couple.

Did either one of you ever toss the "D"-word out?

Lacey: Oh! Absolutely! When you said our covenant to each other, I would even go so far as to say there were times when that didn't even matter to us. It really was more our commitment to God. Sometimes that was what we held onto because we were so done with each other that we were ready to throw that covenant out.

It was—I mean we were facing divorce at one point. I mean, I was at a point where if somebody said what's going on, I'd say well, we're probably getting divorced here in the next few months. I mean we came that close, but it was more about our commitment to God so we had to step back—what does God want? Were we going down the path God wanted us to go? We could both honestly say, No! So is this the right direction, obviously, No!

Bob: Lacy, there's undoubtedly a mom or a dad listening right now who are in the middle whatever crisis their facing and they are at odds with one another. They've talked about, thought about, wondered about divorce. What would you say to them in the midst of that?

Lacey: Whew! That's heavy!

Bob: You've been there.

Lacey: Yes! The biggest thing that I feel like I forgot sometimes in the midst of those moments when we were facing divorce, was how much bigger God was than my problems. I always felt like in those moments, God cannot possibly fix this mess, like our mess was so much bigger than God. How silly is that?

I made God small and put Him inside this box. That's not really God, that's what I was picturing. When I was finally able to step back and just look at the big picture, I could realize God is so much bigger than any mess I make and He loves me enough to help me through it, not that He's going to snap His fingers and fix it, but He will help me through it. I feel like a lot of times people look at their marriage and they think there is no way that this can ever be fixed. It's too far gone. God is bigger, He's so much bigger.

Dennis: There's a by-line on your book we talked about earlier. *Love More, Worry Less and See God in the Midst of Your Adversity*. That's what you're saying, that is remember who God is in the midst of the storm. Don't believe the wrong thing about Him.

In the midst of all this, your marriage is going through its struggles, Christian is having these surgeries, God spoke to you. This got me; I've got to tell you, as a daddy, God spoke to you about not hiding your son's face. Share with our listeners what took place there, and maybe a little bit of the context.

Lacey: Sure.

Dennis: —for why you would be hiding your son's face.

Lacey: Yeah, yeah! I wasn't hiding Christian's face out of embarrassment or shame. I loved this child, I thought he was beautiful, but the thing was, not everybody agreed with me. That became blatantly apparent when we went out in public. We would get some of the worst stares, people would whisper behind my back when they thought I couldn't hear them. I mean then we would have people come up to us, too, with all this what's wrong with your baby? why does he look like that? what's that on his face?
.
Dennis: And some would even say, Why didn't you have an abortion?

Lacey: Those people weren't to my face, thankfully. Those were usually through social media. But we did get those as well. I couldn'teven post a picture on social media of my child without garnering things like that.

We heard that and worse. Why didn't you abort that? My first instinct was Christian cannot hear these things about himself. I won't allow it. If what I got to do is hide him, to protect him, that's what I'll do.

Dennis: Mama Bear was coming out.

Lacey: Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! So I put a blanket over his car seat any time we were out in public. That way nobody could really see what was under the little blanket there and I could get my groceries, and I could do my thing and nobody bothered me. It was unreal how many people would come up and say do you mind if I take a peek under that blanket? And I'd be like yes I mind. They would be like what? [Laugh] Well he's sleeping, trying to shoo them away. They were like well I won't wake him up. I'd be like you've got to be kidding me! [laughs]

Let me get my groceries and go on. It happened so many times! It wasn't once or twice, it was dozens and dozens of times. People would, strangers, would approach me, do you mind if I like take a peek at your baby, look at your baby?

God what are you trying to tell me here? It got to the point where, it's like, I'm not supposed to hide this baby. He's meant to be seen. Little did I know what that would turn into down the road as he got older with the book and social media and things like that. But it was as if God, Himself, had spoken to me. Don't hide him! He has a message to share.

Dennis: I said it got me emotionally to hear that story. Looking at his picture, I thought, Christian is an image bearer. He bears the image of Almighty God.

Lacey: Yes he does!

Dennis: In fact, in some ways he proclaims more about God even though he's less than perfect on the outside. You know what I mean? He declares something about God that frankly many of us would never imagine.

Lacey: Right!

Dennis: Powerful!

Lacey: Yes!

Dennis: And you've actually had people write you and tell you, thank you for being an inspiration for loving your son.

Lacey: Yes!

Dennis: 300,000 on your Facebook page?

Lacey: Yes, over that. [laughs] It's crazy!

Dennis: It's interesting how God takes something like this, and there's so many messages for different people in different walks of life, and your life intersects with them. The YouTube video that I watched that is seven and a half minutes long, how many people have watched that?

Lacey: Millions! I couldn't even…we've lost count. Millions upon millions!

Bob: We've got a link to it. If folks haven't seen it they can go to *FamilyLifeToday.com* and see you telling the story with Christian there on your lap. I have to wonder after Christian was born when you went back and read Psalm 139, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' How did you process that verse?

Lacey: At first, I was of kind of like, God, I don't understand your plan here, I don't understand what's going on, why you're letting things unfold this way, but if Christian is fearfully and wonderfully made, why are we going through this? Why are we dealing with these things, why is this painful? Why can't we just not have this pain?

But looking back and seeing how things have played out and seeing God's plan unfolding, it makes perfect sense to me now. It's more beautiful, I think, than if it had played out the way I wanted it to. I really get to see the meaning of fearfully and

wonderfully made through Christian because Christian doesn't look perfect by our societal standards. There are negative comments that we hear about his appearance but there is no caveat in that verse that says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made so long as we have eyes.

Bob: Yes, or except for a few of…

Lacey: Yes! —except for a few kids who are born like this. It really has, I mean,—you know hindsight is 20/20 and I'm getting to just see it play out and it's just beautiful.

Dennis: You're reminding me of a Psalm, Psalm 8, that I wrote my granddaughter's name in because she lived seven days. I wrote this on June 21st, 2008. It says, 'You had set your glory above the heavens, oh God. Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have established strength, because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.'

Your son is a living message.

Lacey: He is!

Dennis: He is a living message of the grandeur of God. This Psalm starts with this: it says, 'Oh, Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth.'

Christian is a living messenger to a time, more than likely you will not see.

Lacey: Yes!

Dennis: He is still going to be proclaiming who God is in his unique way.

Lacy, I just want to thank you and Chris for in the midst of it, not quitting on your marriage, not quitting on your love for your little boy, and ending up having another little boy as well, Chandler. I just thank you that you've been faithful.

Lacey: Thank you.

Dennis: You've been faithful to what God called you to do, and you've believed the right thing about God and you haven't quit.

Lacey: Thank you.

Michelle: *FamilyLife Today* is brought to you by FamilyLife in Little Rock, Arkansas. And although FamilyLife is located in the United States of America, we understand that our cultures vary but the issues facing us are similar. We all have joys in life, we all struggle and we all want to love and be loved. And we want your family, your marriage and your relationships to succeed.

FamilyLife's mission is to effectively develop godly families, the kind of families that change the world one home at a time. A key part of our mission includes strengthening marriages and families all around the world. We want to do whatever we can do to bring timeless truth to bare on the challenges you face as you seek to strengthen your family.

You can find out more about FamilyLife by visiting our website FamilyLifeGlobal.com. Again that's FamilyLifeGlobal.com. And while you are there click on the radio button to listen to other *FamilyLife Today* broadcasts. Again that's FamilyLifeGlobal.com.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our global broadcast manager Rhonda Street. I also want to thank our editor Larry Loraine. For Dennis Rainey and Bob Lepine, I'm Michelle Hill and I invite you to join us again for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

FamilyLife: Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

Copyright © 2018 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.