FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

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

A Wife's Quiet Influence

Guests:	Barbara Rainey
From the series:	25 Years of Radio: Dennis and Barbara Rainey (Day 2 of 3)
Air date:	November 21, 2017

Bob: The early weeks and months of any marriage are a time of discovery / a time when we learn things about one another as husband and wife. That was the case for Dennis and Barbara Rainey as they began their marriage with a honeymoon that involved camping.

Barbara: One of the things that I learned probably from the camping—

Dennis: —is that it snows at about 8,000 feet in September. [Laughter]

Barbara: Yes! I learned that, but I learned that I married someone who likes to do adventurous things. This was the beginning of many new experiences that I'd never done before, and camping was the first one. We camped at 8,000 feet and I nearly froze to death. [Laughter]

Bob: This is *FamilyLife Today*. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. The honeymoon years are not the only time when we learn things about one another in marriage. In fact, that's something that continues throughout the journey. We'll hear more about that from Dennis and Barbara Rainey today. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us on the *This Is Your Life* edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

Dennis: Are you going to make me cry again today?

Bob: Well, we'll see what happens as we—[Laughter]—as we listen to some of the highlights of the last 25 years on *FamilyLife Today*—and hear from your children, which we've already done—and today, hear some of the things that Barbara has shared, over the years, that have been pivotal moments on this program.

One of those pivotal moments was when she shared with us the story of your courtship and your honeymoon. In fact, here were some things during this interview—and I'd been here 25 years, at that point—I've never heard some of these stories—but she talked about you and her and hunting and fishing.

[Previous Interview]

Barbara: We had this very interesting and very fun honeymoon. We traveled around the state of Colorado—we camped one night / we stayed in the hotel another night. We went all over the state for about ten days?—was it ten days or was it two weeks?

Dennis: Yes; it was about ten days.

Barbara: Yes; it was something like that.

Bob: Camping on the honeymoon—that was okay?

Barbara: We went camping on the honeymoon; and yes, it was okay. It was also a brand-new experience. One of the things that I learned probably from the camping—

Dennis: —is that it snows at 8,000 feet in September. [Laughter]

Barbara: Yes! I learned that, but I also learned that I married someone that likes to do adventurous things. This was the beginning of many new experiences that I had never done before, and camping was the first one. We camped at 8,000 feet, and I nearly froze to death. [Laughter]

Bob: Now, you had known Dennis for a couple of years before you guys got married—you had been friends in college.

Barbara: Yes.

Bob: You had this whirlwind engagement, and you were married six weeks after he proposed.

But right away, on the honeymoon, you were starting to realize, “There are things about him I just didn’t know.” [Laughter]

Barbara: Yes; exactly! And that was one of them. We went fishing—I’d never been fishing in my life. I mean, we had a lot of fun—I mean, I enjoyed the camping trip; but I just nearly froze to death.

Bob: Not only did your marriage start off with fishing but, through the years, you’ve learned to enjoy hunting with your husband; is that true?

Barbara: [Laughing] Well, not in his—by his definition; no—not by—

Dennis: I was waiting for the answer to that question.

Barbara: Yes.

Bob: I'm going to read to you out of your journal.

Barbara: Okay; okay, read what I wrote.

Bob: "I have learned to appreciate hunting."

Barbara: Yes!—"appreciate"!

Bob: Maybe appreciate is a better word than—

Barbara: Yes; appreciate is a better word; yes.

Bob: "I actually went with him on an elk hunt a few years ago—

Barbara: I did!

Bob: —"with the camo, the face paint, and the human scent killers sprayed on my body!"

Barbara: I did! [Laughter]

Bob: "Aren't you impressed?"

Barbara: Aren't you impressed? [Laughter]

Bob: That's what you say right here: [Laughter] "Aren't you impressed? [Laughter]

"We hiked and hiked and snuck up a herd of elk, hiding behind trees, like clandestine spies following a double agent down a dark alley in Eastern Europe. It was really *fun*."

Barbara: It was fun! [Laughter]

Bob: But the point is that we're going to face these differences in the first years of our marriage—some of them crop up ten years in / some in fifteen—it's a *lifelong* process of understanding we're different and making those adjustments.

Barbara: Exactly; that really is the point—the differences are there, they're not to be changed, and they are going to be there for life. I think we, somehow, assume, early on, that a lot of the stuff is going to subside, or change, or moderate; but who we are is who we are. I'm just amazed at how *little* really changes over time—you either fight it, and resent it, and resist it; or you join and learn to actually enjoy it and appreciate it.

Now, do I love to go hunting?—no! I enjoyed that; because it was active, and we were hiking in the mountains, and it was beautiful.

Dennis: —and it was warm.

Barbara: And it was reasonably warm; yes! But the kind of hunting he is often inviting me to go on, which I have refused, is the kind where you get up at three or four in the morning in the winter. You go sit, you can't talk, you can hardly breathe, and it is *freezing*! [Laughter] So, you know, hiking in the mountains, we could talk as we went, until we actually saw the elk—and then we had to be quiet—but it was a much different kind of experience—so I could appreciate that one. But sitting in a deer stand—I've done it once, and I'm not really interested in going there again.

[Studio]

Dennis: And she hasn't, by the way! [Laughter] Let's let the truth be known! [Laughter] There have been some false promises in our marriage—our marriage covenant was not one of them—[Laughter]—but one of the false promises was: "If I gardened with her, she'd go hunting with me." We've settled this, but she completely reneged.

Bob: You've done a lot more gardening than she's done hunting.

Dennis: Oh my goodness! But here's what our listeners don't know. Barbara has paid a price for FamilyLife and building a ministry over the past 41 years—that few people could ever understand—that takes place behind the scenes. There is a price paid by the wife of any Christian leader that only a few really have any understanding of the *gravity* of what has to be carried by that wife.

Bob: Can you imagine a day in the future, where Barbara's got camo on again, and face paint, and human body scent, and all of that? [Laughter]

Dennis: If you put me in a quiet, dark place for a long time, maybe! [Laughter] But not—it's not—it's not—

Bob: —not immediately! [Laughter]

Dennis: It'll be delusional at that point! [Laughter] I can't think about that! [Laughter]

Bob: Back, more than two decades ago, we recorded a series for *FamilyLife Today* called *Creating a More Romantic Marriage*. As a part of that series, we talked with your wife about the fact that women view romance differently than men view romance.

Dennis: Oh, Yes! This was a great moment in *FamilyLife Today* history, right here.

Bob: This really was—here we go!

[Previous Interview]

Barbara: See, I don't think women want to be figured out because when—if they feel like they are figured out, then they feel like they are controlled and they're had. And they don't want to be figured out. I think they want him to love her, and be willing to pursue her, and to continue to know who she is; because she's not that simple. I think women don't want to feel like they're that easy to figure out and: "Oh, he's got me pegged," and "A+B=C, and it's going to always work that way." I think she wants to be more complex, and more intriguing, and more of—

Dennis: —of a challenge.

Barbara: Yes!

Dennis: Because if a man goes "A+B=C" and he knows that's the way it works, then she knows—

Barbara: —that he'll do A+B=C every time.

And that gets boring!

Dennis: —without having to win her—

Barbara: —*and*—

Dennis: —without having to understand—really know where she really is / know the needs.

Barbara: —and I think she would also begin to fear that she'd be taken advantage of. See, women don't want to be taken advantage of because—I just think that's an inherent fear in any woman, whether it's by your children, or by your spouse, or by anybody. I don't mean taken advantage of, sexually; I mean to being taken advantage of in any way, just assuming on the relationship. Therefore, there's no more motivation to continue to pursue / there's no more motivation to make the relationship unique; because if he's got it figured out, then why—why work at it?

Bob: So, if a man says to himself: "I would like"—he's thinking—it's: "Here it is, Thursday. I'd like, a week from Friday, to be a romantic evening together for me and my wife. What can I do to foster that? How can I create a romantic evening, something that will speak romance to her?" You're saying, "Good luck, Buster!"

Barbara: [Laughter] No! I don't think it's that hopeless. I think that a man can make some plans: I think he can make dinner reservations; I think he can bring her flowers; I think he can plan an evening to go to a movie; or he can plan to get a babysitter—whatever is going to make it easier for her. If they've got little, bitty kids, getting a babysitter for me was a treat; because I *hated* getting babysitters.

But the point is—I think he can plan / I think he can do some things that are creative that will communicate to her that she's special / she's unique: "I love you," "I'm willing to sacrifice for you," "You're the most important person to me in the world, and I'm willing to do this for you"; but he needs to do it without the expectation of whatever it is his purpose is. The verse that I go back to all the time—as we've had these talks through the years—I go back to the verse that says, "Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church."

Christ gave Himself up for the church—He denied Himself. I think, when a woman sees that her husband is denying himself for her, she responds to that just as the church then responds to Christ. I think she sees that sacrifice, and she understands that it is because of love.

But when a woman sees a husband doing that—to what appears to her—to be his own personal interests or his own personal need, then she feels somewhat manipulated, or somewhat controlled, or less valued; because I think that her ultimate need is to be loved as Christ loved the church—to be loved, unconditionally, with no strings attached: "It doesn't matter. I love you; it doesn't matter." I think, when she feels that and she understands that commitment and that trust, then she can respond to her husband as he wants her to and as he needs her to.

It's just not as easy as: "Bring home flowers, and light the candles, and have a dinner, and A+B=C."

Bob: I'm not even talking about her responding to *his* need, necessarily. I'm saying—let's say a husband, with the purest of motives, says: "I want you to feel special next Friday night. I'm going to get the sitter. I'm going to take you out to dinner." He's out with her, and it's just not happening for her—for whatever reason, she doesn't feel special / she doesn't feel warm toward him—maybe it's been a bad week. Well, the husband is sitting there, going, "This was a waste of time and money, because she doesn't feel special."

Barbara: It may not work because of the circumstances. But, see, he needs to—he needs to understand his role is to continue to pursue his wife. He may need to say to her: "I'm sorry this didn't work out. I just want you to know, 'I love you anyway.' This may not have been good timing, on my part;"— or whatever—"but I want you to know that my motive is to communicate love and 'I care about you.'"

Maybe he needs to try something else—maybe go for a walk or—I don't know—there are lots of different things—but I think that that's part of the challenge for a husband—is to understand his wife, and understand what communicates love to her, and figure that out, and then do that.

[Studio]

Bob: That is, indeed, part of a challenge for a husband—to understand his wife and figure that out.

Dennis: Men and women marry each other because we're different, by God's design. He made men with a desire to pursue a woman. Men need to do that—they need to love well, and they don't need to quit. I think that's what a woman is wanting to know: "Will my husband quit on me?" I remember having that conversation, early on, with Barbara in our marriage. She was really wanting to know: "Am I in this for keeps? Is this a lifetime commitment?" I think, behind everything she's saying, that's what women want to see us, as men, prove, over and over and over again.

To that—I know what men are thinking—it's like: "Come on! I've done this a hundred times! Doesn't it prove to you?" But she's not a machine / you're not a machine—you're two human beings made in the image of God. You are in a love dance and in a spiritual relationship with God—a relationship with three—you are trying to hammer out life, as He designed it. Therein is both the sacrifice / the joy, the pursuit, the satisfaction of the delight of finding your wife, and knowing you've met her in her point of need and encouraging her. I can just tell you that, after 45 years, it gets better and better and better. It's *not* perfect, but I can't imagine starting over.

Bob: One of the things I think our listeners have most appreciated about Barbara's participation in this program is that she has been honest, and authentic, and candid.

Dennis: A little too much, I might add. [Laughter]

Bob: She has! She has, just as she did right there—she has said: "This is how I think, and how I feel, and how a lot of women think and feel. She was speaking to a group, a while back, about the challenges associated with adoption. In the midst of that, she was transparent about the fact that you guys faced challenges as adoptive parents. It was encouraging, I know, for a lot of moms; because a lot of moms have told me how encouraged they were by this—just to know that it was a decision that you guys look back on and say: "We'd do it again, but it was *hard*."

[Previous Message]

Barbara: I've clearly learned more about God's love through Deborah than probably any other person on the planet. Our five biological children tested us, and they tried us, and they rebelled, and they were disobedient at times; but nothing like our daughter, Deborah. She tested our love more than all five of the others combined, actually.

Dennis and I, as parents, faced countless opportunities to reject her—or to walk away and say: "This is too hard. We're not going to do this anymore"; but we chose, over and over again, to love her; because we knew we did, and we knew that God wanted us to. We knew she would not be redeemed if we didn't.

A few months ago, I just jotted some things down in my little journal area in the computer. I wanted to read you a couple of things that I wrote about loving Deborah.

> If Deborah were not mine—if she were not my child—would I love her? If I just passed her on the street someday, like I do countless other people, day after day, what would attract me to her? What would draw me to her? What would make me love her out of all the other people that I see, day after day?
>
> She could just be another human being on this planet, but she's not. God has made her ours somehow. I have discovered a kind of love for Deborah that is not unlike my love [Overcome with emotion, saying, "Excuse me,"] for any of my other five children. I have discovered a taste of God's unfathomable, undeserved, unexplainable, extravagant, non-human love. It is a supernatural love that is defined by grace.

I want you to hear me clearly in this—I don't love her more than my other five children, but I do love her in a different way. I know more love for my other kids than I would have without her.

John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He teaches us and He taught us that the essence of loving another person is giving—giving of ourselves / denying ourselves for another human being. First John 3:16 says this, "By this we know love because He laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." Parenting an adopted child might require you to lay down your life for that child. In many ways, it has required that of us—it has called us to levels and depths of love and commitment that I would have never dreamed that I was capable of. But God knew that He could give us that kind of love / that kind of resource to love her and stay committed to her no matter what.

In John, Chapter 9, Jesus was talking to the disciples. There was a man, who was there, who was blind from birth. The disciples came up to Him and they said to Jesus: "Who sinned? This man or his parents that he was born blind?"

What they were saying was: "Whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Who can we blame for this man being blind?" And Jesus said, "Neither his parents nor he sinned, but it was so that the power of God might be made known."

And that's what we have seen happen in our family life because of adoption. We have been given, as very good friends of ours like to say, an awesome opportunity to see God work. We have truly seen God work in ways that we would never have seen, were it not for the privilege of adoption. God is in the business of giving us opportunities to see Him work. He wants to get the glory.

There is no question that it is God who has walked us through this; and because of that, we know Him in a way we would have never known Him. We understand love for, not only our daughter, but our children—and others as well—in ways that we would've never known if it were not for the privilege of having an adopted daughter in our family.

[Studio]

Bob: Again, we've been listening to Barbara as she shared about the challenges and the joys that come from the decision you guys made to adopt.

Dennis: I think all of marriage and all of raising children is God's tutoring us to learn how to love. I think her description of what we've learned, with one of the greatest privileges in my life of receiving Deborah as our daughter—what we've learned through her—immeasurable.

One of the things I delight in telling Deborah—even in the midst of when she was struggling—I would say to her: "Deborah, 1,000 times out of 1,000, we would adopt you. Even knowing the pain it would be, 1,000 times out of 1,000, we'd do it.

"You're a delight. You are our daughter. We love you. You are in our family." It was in those moments she didn't want to be, just like we don't want to be sometimes—we don't want to be in God's family. We didn't do it perfectly; she didn't either.

But Bob, I would have to say one of the greatest delights of our life today are really seeing Deborah, and her husband Jason, and our two granddaughters, Nora and Alice, doing really well—just delighting in them, as a married couple / now married 13 years—and got a great family going on, and making an impact in their community and contributing.

What a privilege! What a privilege to *love* another human being, whether it be a biological child or one that is grafted in by the supernatural—the supernatural hand of God—going, "I want *you* over here with *you*." I stand amazed!

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 © 2017 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.