Bob: If you are a stay-at-home wife or a mom, somebody calls you a "housewife" or a "homemaker." Does that offend you?

Carolyn: Well, you know, women can get offended by that because it's the "I am defined by my housework skills," and the skillset to make a home isn't the issue, but it's what we always react to – "I don't want to be known just for dusting and vacuuming, et cetera. It's the same as if I said, "Let me come into your office and – oh, all you do is answer e-mail and book travel reservations," and these are the tasks that you have to master in order to do what God has called you to do.

But when women hear anything about the home, it's always reduced down to the set of housecleaning and housekeeping tasks rather than understanding that the heart of the home is the people who reside there.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Wednesday, May 13th. Our host is the president of FamilyLife, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. Today Carolyn McCulley joins us to help us think biblically about the high and noble calling God gives women as housewives and stay-at-home moms. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today, thanks for joining us. I know you thought I was trying to get you in trouble when I asked you if it's possible to be a Christian and a feminist.

Dennis: You're going to go back and ask the question again today, stir it up again today.

Bob: No, I have a different question that I thought I'd …

Dennis: When you throw a rock at a hornet's nest, and you hit it once, do you throw it again and still stand there?
Bob: I have a different question that I thought I'd ask you and just see what you think and see what our guest thinks, all right?

Dennis: Well, let's introduce our guest.

Bob: All right, you can do that.

Dennis: Carolyn McCulley joins us again on FamilyLife Today. She is the author of "Radical Womanhood," and, really, she's the one – Bob, she's the one who is throwing the stone. You and I are just …

Carolyn: Wait, here it comes.

Dennis: We're just tossing softballs to her. She's the troublemaker here.

Bob: That's right.

Dennis: We'll give them her address at the end of this broadcast. So, anyway, Carolyn, welcome to FamilyLife Today.

Bob: After that, welcome, yeah.

Carolyn: Thank you?

Dennis: Well, she's tackling a pretty big issue here in this book.

Bob: And the question I want to ask both of you is when you think about homes, the home in America – marriages and families and think about what they were in the '50s and think about what they are today. Has feminism made our marriages and our families better or worse today?

Dennis: I'm going to let Carolyn take a …

Bob: You're going to let her go first on that?

Dennis: First on this one, yeah.

Bob: [clucks like a chicken]

Dennis: No, there's no cluck factor on this. I am ready for this one, but …

Bob: You're going to defer to Carolyn?

Dennis: I'm going to defer to Carolyn.
Carolyn: Now he's shoving me in front of the hornet's nest. There you go!

Dennis: Here's a stick, hit it! Hit it!

Bob: All right, so what's your answer on that one?

Carolyn: Well, homes, physically, actually are different from the 1950s until now. The average size of the home back then was 983 square feet, and it had a lot more occupants in it. And now we have homes averaging over 2,200 square feet and many fewer occupants in it.

And the reason for that is the fact that we have turned our homes into a place of consumption. It used to be that the home was a place of production. Our idea of what the home is and actually what Betty Friedan was rebelling against in 1963 when she called the suburban home a "comfortable concentration camp." And when she said there such a thing as a "tract housewife syndrome," she was really reacting against the development of the home as a place to receive all the stuff you've been marketed, all the appliances and all the things that you could be gratified by things, and that you can spend all your time dusting your things and collecting your things and showcasing your things, and that you should be satisfied by things.

And, to that degree, I agree with her. It isn't sufficient. But the rebellion against being at home because of the rebellion against the consumerist idea of home is there to just have stuff to make you feel better, and she lost track of the relationships that are maintained there and, interestingly enough, by the time that she died just a few years ago, she had come to change some of her ideas about the value of family.

In the '60s she felt trapped, and she felt like she was confined in the role of being a wife and mother, and so she divorced her husband. But by the end of her life, she was saying that family is a wonderful thing, and she was glad that her children had married, and she was glad that she had grandchildren.

Bob: So I guess a part of what I hear you saying is there were flaws before the second wave of feminism back in the '50s in our homes and our families, and there are flaws post-third wave feminism in our homes and our families. And I guess the better-or-worse question is really somewhat relative term because both of them had cracks in them, didn't they?

Carolyn: They did. In fact, I was so surprised, in doing the research for this book, to find out about the history of domesticity. I had no idea that the 19th century had such an impact upon what happened in the late 20th century and in the 21st century.
The profound changes that came about in the 19th century started out in a good way. At the time when the Industrial Revolution came around, and men were drawn away from the home as a place of joint productivity, a craft, or your small farm or whatever you were doing. As they were pulled out to be wage earners in the Industrial Revolution, everyone saw that this competitiveness and this unregulated system for just pure greed and gain was a problem. And so they said, the home, it's a place of refining, it's a haven, and everyone started looking at a woman who was leading her home and cultivating her home as a place where it was a refuge, and it was wonderful.

And these were the years, about 1830 to 1850, known as the "Golden Age of Domesticity," and we would look back on that now and say, "Oh, that's so wonderful," and, in fact, it was, but it was also the place where feminism got its start. Because what accidentally happened was that our culture said that males are no longer responsible for cultivating noble character; for being the ones involved with their children; for training their children. They were just sent out into the workplace to be greedy, greedy, greedy, and they needed to come home to be refined by their wives.

And what happened was that we started to say these virtues are women's world, and these greedy virtues are a male's world, and it set up the whole progressive era of the 19th century where women said, "Hey, if we're in charge of civilizing the world in our culture, we're going to take it out into the streets, and we're going to take it out as a movement," and women became in charge of nagging men to change of saying, "Men are drunks, men are gamblers, men have all these problems, and we're here as the virtuous women to refine them and change them."

Bob: You know, I'm sitting here thinking that Dennis is thinking, "Boy, I'm glad that Carolyn has answered that as completely and fully as she has because …

Dennis: What's left to be said?

Bob: … maybe Bob will forget that I'm supposed to answer it, too, and I'll be off the hook. But I haven't forgotten, so, Rainey, I'm turning to you – are homes today better post-third wave feminism than they were in the '50s?

Dennis: Well, I'm not going to be a politician at this point and say it's 50-50. I'm going to say they're 10-percent better, 90-percent worse. Now, having said that, there was a lot that wasn't right 30, 40 years ago that's been carried forward, and you can't blame everything on feminism.

Bob: Right.

Dennis: The 10 percent that's better, I think feminism has done a worthy job of bringing the needs of women to the forefront so that men might finally hear it and
finally take their plea to heart that, yes, women are not things to be owned or to be kept or to be managed, but they are treasures that God has stewarded men with in marriage especially, to be able to care for, nourish, cherish, and help their wives become all that He intended.

So I think feminism has brought the plight of women who have been abused to the forefront. I wouldn't agree with all their methods in doing that. But you know what? As a result, I think many men, Christian and non-Christian men, have heard their plight. The 90 percent harm that has been done that I think can be partially laid at the feet of feminism is, first of all, the culture of divorce.

Feminism has talked about no boundaries, no commitment, and as a result we've got a generation of young people who really don't think about until death do us part.

Bob: Before you get to a culture of divorce, you've got to backtrack a little bit and say there's even a culture of no marriage.

Dennis: Well, that's my second one – redefining marriage. Are you going to let me answer the question, Bob?

Bob: I'll let you answer the question, I'm sorry. Your soapbox …

Dennis: It's my soapbox. That really is the second one, because I do think their whole redefinition of what it means to be a woman and to be a man today has resulted in the re-definition of marriage and trying to include marriage to be between two people of the same sex. There is no culture in the history of humankind that has ever survived the re-definition of marriage. History will show no nation can outlive a marriage relationship that isn't a husband and a wife. That's just all there is to it sociologically.

Finally, the third area where I think feminism has really hurt the family is really around the lies they have taught to both sexes about who they are; that men and women are just too interchangeable units. There is virtually no difference between them and in an effort to try to create equal value, I think they have ignored some of the God-given, God-defined responsibilities of men and women that we need to pay attention to.

Bob: And you’d affirm equal value and equal work between men and women.

Dennis: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

Bob: You're just saying that there is different functioning that ought to take place in a marriage and in a family.
**Dennis:** Right. And in the process of this, they have completely redefined what the family looks like telling women that no, you shouldn't submit to your husband; that he isn't the head of the home; that you're both equal. And to believe that, you've got to do some fancy footwork around some solid passages of Scripture that have been embraced and believed by the church for centuries. And it's simply not true.

God designed the home to operate in a certain structure. Men were to be the serving leaders and lovers and nourishers and cherishers of their wives, giving up their lives for their wives so that they might become like Christ. And, as a result of men leading like this, women were commanded by God to submit to that worthy male leadership, noble male leadership. And when you see that together, even in an imperfect world, that makes a compelling picture. But feminism wants to do away with the picture.

**Bob:** Now Carolyn is sitting here going, "Boy, I'm glad he got up on the soapbox. He can go after it, too."

I guess if we look at marriage and family today, we have to say in some ways, as you've said, there has been a little bit of strengthening, but, by and large, our social structure, our core unit of what it means to be a society is weakened today. And, Carolyn, feminism has got to own some of the blame for that, don't you think?

**Carolyn:** Feminism and, oddly enough, social Darwinism. Many people might not realize that when Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species" in the mid-19th century, what came out of that was the idea that men had been able to evolve to higher and higher levels because they were outside of the home. They were out competing, and the competition was what brought about this increase in their value and their capabilities, and that women, by being at home, were less evolved.

And feminists jumped on this, and they believed it, so everyone wanted to make a stampede out of the home. If that was the place that was going to hold you back, it was time to get out. And so the ideas that were raised when I was a child, in the '60s and '70s, have their roots a whole century ago, and everyone wanted out because they believed in this humanistic idea that was not scriptural, and it wasn't just a feminist concept.

**Bob:** And that began to affect our thinking about things like home ec classes in school. I mean, I'm thinking back to when I was in high school – guys took shop, girls took home ec. Now, I was kind of at the end of that whole phenomenon. Today does anybody teach home ec anymore?

**Carolyn:** I don't think so.
Dennis: Oh, you don't know?

Carolyn: I don't know.

Dennis: It used to be – wasn't there a class – Future Homemakers of America? FHA? Do you know what the name of that organization is now?

Carolyn: No, what?

Dennis: Look it up, Keith. It's the FCCLA or something – I've thrown the stone at this hornet's nest, too.

Bob: And you want to rattle it again, huh?

Carolyn: I'm not surprised.

Dennis: This is interesting.

Keith: FCCLA – Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America.

Carolyn: So covering all your bases.

Bob: Right. There are good and godly people who are a part of the FCCLA attending these meetings and – aren't there? I mean, there are some nice, Christian people who go and lead it.

Dennis: Don't look at me, I don't know, but here is the name of the group – the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America. Home used to be in the center – FHA – Future Homemakers of America. Family, career and community leaders – I just wonder if there are any homemaking skills being taught in that class? And you know what? I'm sure I'll receive some e-mails that will highly educate me about what's being taught at that point.

Carolyn: Well, you know, women can get offended by that because it's the "I am defined by my housework skills." The skillset to make a home isn't the issue, but it's what we always react to – "I don't want to be known just for dusting and vacuuming," et cetera. It's the same as if I said, "Let me come into your office and – oh, all you do is answer e-mail and book travel reservations" …

Bob: Hey! Quit picking on me!

Carolyn: But these are the tasks that you have to master in order to do what God has called you to do. But when women hear anything about the home, it's always reduced down to the set of housecleaning and housekeeping tasks rather than understanding that the heart of the home is the people who reside there.
Bob: All I remember about home ec when it was taught in junior high is that a bunch of the football players wanted to sign up for it because all the girls were in the class.

Dennis: Oh, I thought it was an easy class to get an A.

Bob: The girls were in there, and they did a lot of baking, and they thought, "This is the class for me."

Dennis: But you could get on the phone right now and call all four of my daughters, three of whom are married, and ask them if the home they grew up in just taught them and pegged them in this housekeeping, housecleaning, domesticated woman caricature. I mean, we created a full-spectrum opportunity for them, and I'm sure what the people at the FFCLA are going to say — "We're just trying to give these young ladies a full look at what it ought to be in terms of their future."

Carolyn: Well, and those are the roots of the home ec movement, in fact. When it began in the early 20th century, the idea was that we had to bring hygiene and the latest scientific standards to the home; that women were incapable of actually running their homes and so in terms of urban renewal and reform, we needed to professionalize the home and, in fact, some people were pushing for a community kind of existence.

Bob: But what you've got with something like the FCCLA is I think two things — one is to say that family, career and community are all on equal plane. And I don't know that the Scriptures say for any of us, male or female, that family, career and community are on an equal plane. I think there is a priority in all of that.

Carolyn: And one thing that's missing — the church.

Bob: That's right. And then the second thing that you've got here is the mythology that has grown up for many women and that's giving them ulcers today, which is the "you can have it all. You can have a wonderful, warm, fulfilling marriage and family, a great career, and community service, and you can do it on the backstroke. It's easy." And women are finding that's just not true.

Carolyn: This kind of idea has actually increased the stress level of women. And in writing this book, I had collected so many testimonies from women I knew who had seen God's faithfulness in different areas of their lives because I, as a single and childless woman, can only present one perspective on this. But, through the years, I have encouraged my female friends who are married, who are mothers, by saying, "Oh, I know someone who has walked just through that. Let me tell you this story."
And one of the stories that I have included in this book is about a woman who was just so stressed out, believing that she could have it all and have it all at the same time, and her family life was suffering. And when she decided to come home and take care of her children and take care of her ailing mother-in-law and to take care of the people who needed the attention, her stress level went down, and God blessed her husband and increased his salary.

And I don't want to offer that as an idea of, like, "Well, you know, if you decide not to do this multitasking and come home then automatic jackpot." Because I know a lot of women are struggling, and I know a lot of families are struggling to honor God by keeping the balance between the private fear, which is the term I use in referencing the home because I think it helps people to understand those relationships, and the public’s fear of the marketplace. We have put so much value on the public sphere that what’s happening in the private sphere is hurting us.

**Dennis:** One of the things you talk about in your book is the feminist movement really has not valued the role of motherhood when they do value career, and they value the marketplace use of their skills and abilities. It's really time for a statement that I used to make only to the men in the Weekend to Remember Marriage Conference when I was challenging them to step up and really pay attention to their marriage and family.

It's really a statement now that really has to be made to both men and women, and the statement is this – no amount of success in the marketplace will compensate for failure at home, especially when your kids are little.

I realize there are a lot of women who get in situations where financially they have to work, they have to be gone, and I understand those matters, but when children are little, they need a mommy, they need a mom at home and a dad caring for them, providing the nurturing support and leadership, the discipline, really, the total package of what I think the Bible calls Christian parents.

You know, Carolyn, I know you are not married.

**Carolyn:** But I would like to be.

**Dennis:** There you go. You did not kiss marriage goodbye, then. So you’ve not waved goodbye to marriage?

**Carolyn:** No, that’s a false rumor.

**Dennis:** You did write that book, but you …

**Bob:** She was just asking the question.
Carolyn: It was, and it ended …

[crosstalk]

Bob: She wasn't making a declarative statement.

Dennis: "I Kissed Marriage Goodbye," so she hasn't done that, but she is a radical woman. It's going to take a radical man to marry her, all right? And that, really, I think, is one of the major calls in this culture today.

Bob: Now, wait, one of the basic calls is for a radical man to step forward and marry Carolyn?

Carolyn: I think it is.

Dennis: That's a great conclusion to our broadcast. I think for all men to be the kind of caring men of their wives that the need to be, that really has been the message, I think, here all this week on FamilyLife Today. We've really, I think, challenged both men and women to embrace God's design but especially men – you're laughing.

Bob: No, here is the reason I'm laughing and, Carolyn, thanks for being on today's program. I'm laughing because what our listeners don't know is that Carolyn's friend, Nancy Leigh Demoss, has been listening as we've been getting these interviews ready and just is saying, "Thank you, Lord, that they are talking to her and not me."

[laughter]

Carolyn: Yes.

Bob: Right? Am I right about that? She's nodding in the other studio. If our listeners would like to get a copy of Carolyn's book, it's called "Radical Womanhood." We have it in our FamilyLife Resource Center. You can go online at FamilyLifeToday.com, and you'll find information about the book there.

In addition, there is information about a book that Carolyn contributed to called "Becoming God's True Woman," that was edited by Nancy Leigh Demoss but also has a lot of chapters for married women in it as well.

Again, you can go online at FamilyLifeToday.com or call 1-800-FLTODAY for more information about either or both of these books – "Radical Womanhood," or "Becoming God's True Woman." Look for information online at FamilyLifeToday.com or call us, toll-free, at 1-800-F-as-in-family, L-as-in-life, and then the word TODAY.
And when you get in touch with us or even if you’re not getting in touch with us, we want to ask you to get in touch with us and consider making a donation this month to the ministry of FamilyLife Today, and the reason is because, as some of you’ve heard Dennis mention, this has been a particularly challenging season for us here at FamilyLife. Our revenue from donations is down about $1 million right now from where we were at this time last year. And we’ve had to respond to that by releasing a number of staff members, we’ve instituted pay cuts, we’ve pulled back on some of what we are able to do as a ministry.

But we had some friends step forward this month, and they have offered to give us a boost. They have offered to match every donation that we receive this month on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to a total of $356,000. So we’re coming to our listeners and saying, "Will you do whatever it is you are able to do? Will you do your part so that we can take full advantage of this special matching gift opportunity?"

And you can do that easily online at FamilyLifeToday.com or you can call us, toll-free, at 1-800-FLTODAY. Please do whatever it is you are able to do. We do hope to hear from you, and we want to say thanks in advance for listening, thanks for donating, and thanks for praying for us during this challenging season as well. We appreciate you.

Now, tomorrow we’re going to hear a message from Dennis about how we ought to respond as parents if our teenagers are trying to get away with stuff they shouldn't be trying to get away with – how do you teach your teens to follow the rules? That's coming up tomorrow. I hope you can be with us for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. We’ll see you back next time for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas – help for today; hope for tomorrow.

We are so happy to provide these transcripts for you. However, there is a cost to transcribe, create, and produce them for our website. If you’ve benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider donating today to help defray the costs?

Copyright © FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

www.FamilyLife.com