Bob: When it comes to raising our children, moms and dads need a little help. I mean, let’s be honest. Author, Doyle Roth, says that men in particular—we need other guys to help us grow as we try to raise our children.

Doyle: When I was a young guy, just raising kids, I got involved in a study with men. It was not just a fluffy study. This was a serious study between dads. This went on every Wednesday morning at six o’clock for close to 10 years.

We were together every Wednesday; and if you got out of line—these other men—they’d check in the next week, “How are you doing with your attitude? Are you doing better?” I think it is a great growing opportunity for men to be involved with other men. That is essential. We all got, basically, the same problems. We just need to come together and really commit to follow the Bible.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, December 9th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. Doyle Roth joins us today to help us see how following the Bible applies when it comes to dads being involved in helping to raise their children. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us. You know what my favorite movie is; right?

Dennis: Are you talking—

Bob: Oh, come on.

Dennis: —about It’s A Wonderful Life?

Bob: It’s A Wonderful Life, yes, my favorite movie of all time. I’ve watched it more than any other movie. We watch it every year at Christmas. I just love the film.

There’s a scene in the movie where Jimmy Stewart’s had a bad day. The money is gone. He’s not sure where it is, and things are just not going well. He’s tense, and he’s on edge. He’s at the house, and everything is wrong. The furniture is not the way it’s supposed to be, and Susie is playing the same song over and over again on the piano.
His son is following him around and trying to bug him. There’s just a point where he
says to Donna Reed—Jimmy Stewart turns to her and says, “Why do we have to have
all these kids anyway?”

I laugh about that because Mary Ann and I have looked at each other on more than one
occasion and said, “Why did we have to have all these kids anyway?” There are just
moments.

**Dennis:** There are moments of raising a family today, because the pace of life and who
we are as human beings, where we do feel that way. I think our guest on today’s
broadcast, who has written two books—first of all, *Oops! I Forgot My Wife*, and a
sequel that is *Oops! We Forgot the Kids*.

**Bob:** I just want to say, in case my kids are listening, “We are glad we had you, and we
wouldn’t trade any of you in”—

**Dennis:** Of course! Of course!

**Bob:** —but there have been days.

**Dennis:** They’re now having their families. They understand.

**Bob:** They understand. (Laughter)

**Dennis:** Doyle, I’d like to welcome you to the broadcast.

**Doyle:** Thank you so much, Dennis. Glad to be with you and Bob.

**Dennis:** Doyle is a businessman who has a heart for marriages and families. He is a
counselor. He and his wife Nancy have been married for more than four decades—
have four adult children.

I guess—you know, I understand how your first book, *Oops! I Forgot My Wife*, came
about—out of the drama of you really spending the first half a dozen years of your
marriage, really ignoring her—kind of living in your own world, being selfish. These are
words you used about yourself, by the way, not me.

**Doyle:** That’s true.

**Dennis:** I want to know what’s the genesis of this book, *Oops! We Forgot the Kids*.

**Doyle:** Well, it comes out of a more healthy marriage, obviously. It comes out of the
fact that we now have children, and we wanted to do the best job we could in parenting.
We were on that learning curve. That became a part of our spiritual journey, as well;
but I sort of intersected with a new part of my being.
My marriage was getting better; but I could see, reflected in my parenting, the same issue—the issue of self-centeredness. I was taking care of things around the family: providing a living, doing those things, but not very tolerant of the children, not using good healthy parenting methods. Our parenting needed some help.

**Bob:** If I were to go back and observe the first five or ten years of your parenting, what kind of parent were you? What was your "motis operendi"?

**Doyle:** I was probably angry. I was probably loud. I was probably impatient. Those things would, I think, be typical in the early years of our parenting.

**Dennis:** What were you angry at?

**Doyle:** Well, just the kids would get on my nerves. They wouldn’t obey. I mean, we had two kids at that time. It was just tough.

**Dennis:** Are you a high-control person? I mean, you talked about in your marriage—

**Doyle:** Yes.

**Dennis:** —how you were—you’d kind of withdrawn and kind of had everything under your own control, thinking about yourself. I would see how children would kind of invade your space at that point.

**Doyle:** Right. I don’t think it was so much control as I didn’t want to take the time. Parenting takes a lot of time. I didn’t want to invest that because I was—again, involved in business, and those were the things that had to change.

**Bob:** The subtitle of your book—in the marriage book, it’s *What Happens When Marriage and Self-Centeredness Collide*; in parenting, it’s *What Happens When Parenting and Self-Centeredness Collide*. That’s really at the core of the issues we deal with in relationships: Whether we are going to be self-focused, or whether we are going to love others; right?

**Doyle:** No, that’s exactly right. I think one of the key things in parenting is to understand that you do not look on your own needs, but you look on others. In this sense, the Philippians’ passage would tell me—in this sense, it’s the needs of my kids—and that I need to apply that biblical principle to my parenting, which involves sacrifice; it involves strategy, planning, effort—all of those things to make better—

**Bob:** It’s exhausting.

**Doyle:** —investment—and it’s exhausting. It’s exhausting. That’s right.
Bob: You just want to give up sometimes.

Doyle: No, that’s right.

Bob: You’ve been there; right?

Doyle: That’s exactly right.

Dennis: You don’t want to die to self. You spoke earlier how there was, well, really a time when you really had to come to Jesus; and you had to confess your self-centeredness and your own hard-headedness with God, then to your wife. Was there a similar moment, as you parented, where you kind of had to come to grips with the same self-centeredness that was really pulling you away from your parental responsibilities?

Doyle: No, there is no question about that. I think you have to confront the self-centeredness if you’re going to be a good parent. There wasn’t a precise time in my life when that happened, but I knew that my anger—I knew that my impatience and things like that had to be dealt with before the Lord spiritually. That radically changed my investment in my kids.

Bob: Walk us through—can you just help somebody see what that looked like in your life because I’m thinking of listeners who are going, “I have had that anger, that impatience. I feel that. I don’t know what to do with mine.” How did you handle yours?

Doyle: What really helped me was giving my family license to help me be a better dad. I told my wife and my children that raising my voice was unacceptable. These kinds of behaviors were unacceptable; and I wanted them to hold me accountable so that I would not raise my voice, and I would not express myself that way.

That became an integral part of my parenting because, all through the teen years and all, I think my family would say, Dennis—I think Nancy would say, if she were sitting here, “That that changed Doyle’s life” because I submitted myself to not raising my voice, managing my patience, not getting angry—those things didn’t work.

Dennis: Well, you submitted yourself to those things, but you also submitted yourself to them.

Doyle: You’re right. Absolutely; and let them be the ones that said, “Daddy, you’re raising your voice.”

Dennis: And gave them access to your life.

Doyle: That’s right.
Dennis: I was talking at one of our Weekend to Remember® marriage getaways with one of our other couples who speak. During the conference, we always—at the conference—Bob, you know this—we’re always trying to share out of our own lives the things we do right, some things we don’t do so right, and some things that we really do wrong.

This speaker’s name was Bill—was talking about how early in their marriage—he came to grips with the fact that he had a problem with his temper.

Doyle: Right.

Dennis: He was taking it out on his wife and that he didn’t like it. Finally, one day driving down the road with her in the passenger seat, he got ticked off and slammed his fist against the windshield. Well, he must have done it with some degree of energy because the entire windshield completely—

Doyle: Oh, my goodness!

Dennis: —broke—front windshield, driving down the road. They pulled off to the side of the road, and he again admitted with his wife that he had a problem.

Doyle: Yes.

Dennis: He said, “I'll tell you what I’m going to do. I want you to have permission to call Dennis Rainey,” and he knocked off a couple of other guys that were good friends of his that she knew as well. He said, “If I ever lose my temper like that again, I want you to call them.”

Doyle: Praise God!

Dennis: Well, I’ve never received a call.

Bob: You never got a call from her.

Dennis: I never got a call from that wife. Now, at that point, what that husband is expressing—he is expressing that he really is sorry about what he’s doing and that he’s willing be humiliated by a phone call if he does it again.

I was on the back row at the conference when the husband was telling this story at the Weekend to Remember marriage getaway, and I looked over at his wife. She looked at me; and she said, “Well, there’s been a couple of times when it was close.”

Doyle: Right.
Dennis: “When it was close.” The point is when you give somebody access to your life, and you say, “Look,” like you did, Doyle. You say to your children, “I don’t want to behave this way.” You’re demonstrating humility; teach-ability; and, really, godliness—that, I would imagine, if we could call your kids right now on the phone—that probably had a big impact in their lives. Have they ever said anything about that to you?

Doyle: We’ve talked about that because it affected their parenting. They parent in a very quiet, reasonable way. I think that was the modeling that was necessary for them to learn that.

Again, it comes back, for me—that my kids would see the inconsistency in my Christian life because that is not what God tells us to do. I think our kids are smarter than that, and they can see right through that. I think asking them to help me was also letting them know that I’m willing to change. When we parent, you need to be willing to change as well—that we’re all on the change curve. They just learn that.

Bob: When you said to your children, “If I raise my voice, I want you to tell me. You’ve got permission to do that.” I can imagine the next time you started to get angry, and your voice started to go up, and somebody said, “Daddy, you’re raising your voice”—

Doyle: Absolutely.

Bob: —I can imagine that making you even a little angrier.

Doyle: Oh, no.

Bob: In the moment.

Doyle: Well, not for me in that sense, Bob, because I was so committed to dealing with this that I appreciated that. I would automatically lower my voice, without questioning what their perspective was.

Bob: Your commitment to dealing with this was fundamental because, as you said, there was an inconsistency between what you were professing about your love for Christ—

Doyle: That’s right.

Bob: —and what you were doing at home. I think that’s not to be missed because some people say, “Well, I want to do this because it’ll make for a happier home.” They’re only committed to it if it’s making for a happier home.

Doyle: Right.
Bob: If they’re not committed to it with a spiritual foundation, with a “I want to do this because this is what God’s called me to, and I want to be right before Him,” that’s just spackling on the walls.

Doyle: No question about that. I think that trickles into a lot of areas of our behavior with our kids but also our mission. Our mission is to go into all the world; right? So many church families are not involved in any mission. They go to church, but that’s it. I think kids see through that. I think they see the reality and the integrity of our Christian lives; they look right through that and see that.

Dennis: One of things you talk about in the book is the importance of mentors for parents today.

Doyle: Yes.

Dennis: I couldn’t agree any more. I was recently speaking in St. Augustine, Florida, at one of our Weekend to Remember marriage getaways. After the dad talk, which is on Sunday morning at the conference where we have the men and the women separate from one another—we talk to the guys straight about being a husband and about being a father.

After it was over, I had three young men, all in their late twenties, early thirties, who stood in line to say, “Dennis, I hear what you’re saying about being a father. I see the example that you’re getting from Scripture; but I want you to know when I was a boy, and I was a child, my dad deserted our family. I never saw a father. I didn’t have a father. The screen is blank. How do I go about addressing that?”

In all three of those situations—they were all separate, almost lined up, one after another, these young men. I looked them each in the eye; and I said, “I want you to think about being a mentor and finding a mentor.”

Doyle: Absolutely.

Dennis: Because, if you’re going to be the dad, the husband, and the man God created you to be, you need to be engaged in both being mentored and in mentoring another person. Comment on the importance you see today in young couples who are starting out their families, just their need to have another couple—

Doyle: Okay.

Dennis: —alongside them.

Doyle: Our book—the Oops! WeForgot the Kids book—really tries to address that by using other couples in the story.
Part of the recovery for A. J. and Ginny, which are—they are one of the problem couples—is that they get involved in a small Bible study that helps grow them, and Jerry and Sue are involved and there are other people involved. That’s very important.

When I was a young guy, just raising kids, I got involved in a study with men. It was not just a fluffy study. This was a serious study between dads. This went on every Wednesday morning at six o’clock for, I bet you, close to 10 years.

We were together every Wednesday. If you got out of line and you talked about your parenting as not being successful or you’re angry, these other men would hold you accountable. So, I think it’s a great growing opportunity for men to be involved with other men, couples to be involved with other couples. That’s essential. We’ve all got, basically, the same problems. We just need to come together, and really commit to following the Bible.

**Bob:** How would those guys hold you accountable? They’d—

**Doyle:** They’d check in the next week.

**Bob:** And just say, “So, what’d you do?”

**Doyle:** Yes. “How’re you doing with your attitude?” “Are you doing better?”

**Bob:** Yes.

**Dennis:** Any of them ever called Nancy?

**Doyle:** Nancy was in a different Bible study (Laughter)—

**Bob:** She had her own group.

**Doyle:** —but our couples’ study was the same.

**Dennis:** Her name was in the phonebook. Those guys could have called her and said, “How’s he doing?”

**Doyle:** Yes. That’s right. (Laughter)

**Dennis:** “Is Doyle blowing smoke?”

**Doyle:** Oh, that’d be scary. (Laughter)

**Bob:** You know, one of the things that we found as we raised our kids is—in those times when we felt like we were just failing—like, you’d leave the house; and it’d be one
of those nights where you’d go, “The kids are going to be in jail by the end of the month.” It just wasn’t going well.

You get together with other parents. You’d talk about some of the issues you’re going through; and you’d find out, “Okay, other families are dealing with some of these issues as well.” Some of the hopelessness you were feeling as a parent started to at least get some space when you heard from other parents saying, “You know what? We’ve been through that.” “Your kids turned out okay; right?”

**Doyle:** No, that’s exactly right. One of the most important things is the sovereignty of God in parenting. I see so many parents that are so afraid that they build such high fences. They try to control everything. You hear of helicopter parents today that don’t let their kids do anything. Those are big issues today.

When I teach on parenting, one of my favorite subjects is that God is sovereign. He’s got to touch the lives of our kids. We can’t do it as parents. We can try to be faithful in our parenting; but eventually, it is God that does this. “Unless the Lord builds the house,” we’re laboring in vain. God has got to be the One that touches our kids.

**Bob:** So, if you were sitting down with parents, first-time parents—they’ve got—the baby’s been home six months. They go, “We want to be the best parents we can be.” Just give me your best counsel that you’d pass along to them for what’s ahead of them on the journey over the next 18 years.

**Doyle:** Okay, number one: You’ve got to know your child because not all kids fit in the same discipline program.

**Bob:** Right. You could discipline one child one way—

**Doyle:** That’s right.

**Bob:** —and the next one—it is not going to work for.

**Doyle:** That’s exactly right. Number two: You better have a relationship with your child that’s healthy, or that child will not pay any attention to your teaching. You’ve got to trust God. You’ve got to believe that God is bigger than you are. These are God’s kids. You need to assume the responsibility. You’re really the steward taking care of His kids. You try to do it well; but ultimately, the results are in His hands.

Consistency—you’ve got to be consistent. You have to work at being there, doing it every day. I often compare to horses—or stuff like that—that I’m familiar with on the ranch. You don’t break a horse to lead by going down there every week. You’ve got to go down there every day—maybe twice a day, three times a day. You have to go revisit; take them through the loops.
Same thing with kids—you need to be consistent in what you do. You need to follow through when you say things. You’ve got to be a model that kids can see that your Christian life is working for you.

**Dennis:** How do you want your children to remember you? What do you hope at the end of your life—maybe they’re gathering around your bed to honor you as their father—what do you hope they’ll compliment you on?

**Doyle:** That I followed the Bible. I’m a Christ follower, and I tried to carry that over into my family.

**Dennis:** You know that’s a great North Star for any man or any woman who might be listening to us today. I’ve been spending some time with Chuck Swindoll recently—not personally, mind you—

**Doyle:** Yes.

**Dennis:** —but in a book that he wrote. Chuck gave me a book; and it’s a commentary on the book of Timothy, 1st and 2nd Timothy.

It’s just been interesting to spend time with Chuck, kind of mentoring me through a good book of coaching me as he gives observations from the life of Paul, who mentored Timothy in life’s most important commitments. He was coaching Timothy in his ministry, in his relationships, in his own life and heart, and spiritual growth with God.

I think all of us, as men—all the women listeners to this broadcast really should take a step back and ask the question, “Who has access to your life? Who’s mentoring you? Who’s speaking into your life?” Maybe it’s through a good book—there’s nothing wrong with that. I wouldn’t want that to take the place of real relationships; but, “Who’s helping you in these important commitments?”

As you were talking, I was thinking about Bob and Mary Ann. They were raising their kids as we were raising ours; and he still is raising his kids, by the way. We’re done, but I learned all kinds of things from Bob. I think—

**Doyle:** Sure.

**Dennis:** —there is a principle of iron sharpening iron—

**Doyle:** Absolutely. Yes.

**Dennis:** —in our lives. If we don’t have those relationships—if we don’t have great books, great resources, that we’re drinking deeply from in our lives, feeding our souls, we can shrivel up and really become self-absorbed.
Bob: You wrote *Oops! We Forgot the Kids* to be one of those mentoring tools. In fact, you’ve got a group of characters in the book; and we’re reading their e-mails back and forth to one another and their text messages in the middle of their parenting. It just drops people down into the middle of what’s going on with some real life parents. I say real life—even though, fictional—because the stories are real life.

This is designed to help parents go, “Okay, other people are dealing with the same stuff we are; and there’s hope. There’re answers.”

Doyle: Absolutely. There is a lot of hope.

Dennis: Doyle, I just appreciate you; and I’m glad—going all the way back to that sixth year, seventh year of marriage when you had to come to grips with your own selfishness—that you did.

Doyle: Praise God! I am, too.

Dennis: I’m sure you’re still dealing with a little of it now.

Doyle: I still do.

Dennis: I am.

Doyle: I still do. (Laughter)

Dennis: Yet, that model is a great model for our listeners because I think you could basically say every issue you’re facing goes back to, “Are you going to be serving self”—

Doyle: That’s right.

Dennis: —“or yielding to Jesus Christ and allowing Him to live His life in and through you?” I appreciate you, appreciate your books, and hope you’ll join us again sometime on *FamilyLife Today*.

Doyle: Thank you so much for having me, Dennis; Bob.

Bob: I really—I hope that folks, who have heard your story, will get copies of your books because I think they’ll find them, first of all, fun to read but also pregnant with a lot of truth. It may be something that they want to pass on to somebody else after they’ve read through it themselves.

We’ve got both of Doyle’s books in our *FamilyLife Today* Resource Center. Go online at FamilyLifeToday.com for more information about the books, *Oops! I Forgot My Wife* and *Oops! We Forgot the Kids*. Again, the website is FamilyLifeToday.com.
have any questions about the books; or if you want to order them by phone, call 1-800-FL-TODAY, 1-800-358-6329. That's 1-800- "F" as in family, "L" as in life, and, then, the word, “TODAY”.

Now, we have had some exciting news here at FamilyLife Today. In fact, I’ve been sharing it with you already this week. We had some friends of the ministry who came to us not long ago; and they said, “We know that December is a critical month of the year for ministries like yours who have to raise funds in order to continue doing what you do.” A lot of people will make year-end donations and, depending on what happens at yearend, you can kind of determine what the coming year is going to look like.

These folks said, “We would like to make a matching-gift challenge. We would like to make available to you funds that we will release when those funds are matched by your donors.” So, when you make a donation of $50, we can go get $50 from the matching-gift fund. They have agreed to that, up to a total of $2.5 million.

Since that time, we’ve had some other folks come along; and they have said, “We might want to add to that total.” So, actually, our matching-gift fund could be growing here in the next few days. We just haven’t heard back from these folks, yet; but we’re asking you, “Can you consider making a year-end donation to help support this ministry and help us be in the best possible position we can be in as we move into 2012?”

If you can, go to FamilyLifeToday.com, click the button that says, “I Care”, and make an online donation; or call toll-free 1-800-358-6329. That’s 1-800- “F” as in family, “L” as in life, and, then, the word, “TODAY”. Make a donation over the phone; and when you do, that donation is going to be matched on a dollar for dollar basis up to a total of, right now, $2.5 million. So, we do hope to hear from you. We need to hear from as many of you as possible if we are going to take full advantage of this matching-gift opportunity. We just want to say, “Thanks,” in advance for whatever you are able to do in support of the ministry of FamilyLife Today.

With that, we’ve got to wrap things up for today. Thanks for being with us. Hope you have a great weekend. Hope you and your family are able to worship together this weekend. Hope you can join us back on Monday when Michael and Gina Spehn are going to be here.

Michael and Gina both lost their spouse within a month of each other. We’ll hear the story of how God walked them through those dark valleys; and then, how God brought them together to blend a new family. That’s coming up Monday. I hope you can be here.

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 will see you back Monday for another edition of FamilyLife Today.
FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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