Bob: Someone has said that courage is not the absence of fear. At one level, courage is fearing God more than you fear anything else. Here’s Dennis Rainey.

Dennis: I think it’s interesting in the Scriptures that there are 365 “fear not’s” in the Bible. “Fear not,”—one for every day of the year. Why do you think God gave us that?—because we’re scaredy cats. We need to be reminded that we should not fear. He is with us. What are you facing, right now, that demands courage?

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, March 8th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. Today, we’ll hear about how courage can be contagious and why we need to be people of courage. Stay tuned.

Dennis: Remain at your post and do your duty, for the glory of God and His Kingdom.

Bob: And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Friday edition. This is kind of the conclusion of the virtual cruise we’ve been on this week.

Dennis: It has kind of felt like that—even the studio was rocked, at points. I think that was from Priscilla Shirer preaching, though.

Bob: She did rock it. We’ve been hearing some messages that were featured onboard the Love Like You Mean It™ marriage cruise, three weeks ago, as we went out, with couples from all over the country, and had a great time—about a thousand couples onboard the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise. One of the cool things about the cruise is that we had the whole ship—and so here’s a whole ship, full of like-minded folks—folks who were onboard with a common purpose and with enough clothing. [Laughter] That was an important part. I have been on one cruise, in my life, that was not a FamilyLife Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise; and you didn’t go up to the pool. You just didn’t go there!

Dennis: Yes, this whole experience was very tasteful, to be with people who are following Jesus Christ—who are there to make good marriages better, to make great marriages even greater, and some others who were there, kind of on a last-ditch effort, in hopes of the experience really helping them. I know of, at least, one couple who canceled a divorce because of the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise.
So, there’s a lot of ministry taking place, a lot of entertainment, a lot of fun walks, and talks, and conversations. It’s really a great way to get reconnected and really provide some fresh hope for your marriage.

**Bob:** Listeners are going to get to hear, today, a portion of the message you shared onboard the cruise—a message about contagious courage. Before we hear that, if you’d like to, next year—instead of experiencing the virtual cruise, if you’d like to experience the actual cruise—we’d love to have you join us. We’re more than 50 percent sold-out, right now, for next year’s cruise; and the price for the cabins will increase on March 15th.

So, we wanted to let you know now is a good time to sign up. In fact, *FamilyLife Today* listeners, who will sign up this week—sign up before the 15th of March—in addition to the lower prices, you will also receive a certificate to attend a *Weekend to Remember®* marriage getaway that you can use for yourself or pass along to somebody you know—who you’d like to just bless them and give them the *Weekend to Remember.* Find out more about all that’s going to be going on on the *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise in 2014, February 10th through the 14th. We leave from Miami. We’re going to the Grand Turks and then coming back. Now is the time to go to FamilyLifeToday.com to get more information, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY.

**Dennis:** I’m looking at some of the quotes from this year. We had a couple who’d been married 52 years, who talked about how stimulating the time was for them and what a great time they had, as a couple. Then here’s one from a couple, married two years. That’s really cool! They said, “We have determined and set our hearts on being courageous, using our brokenness of our past to serve others in *The Art of Marriage®* and the *Stepping Up™* series.” They left there, not only feeling much better about their marriage, but they left there thinking about how they could bring help and hope to other marriages and families in their community.

**Bob:** And they heard you talk about stepping up and being courageous in that final evening together. Our listeners are going to get a chance to hear that today, as well. Here, with a portion of his message on contagious courage, is Dennis Rainey.

[Recorded message]

**Dennis:** I’m here to talk to you about something that’s been on my heart and my chest for a long time. It has to do with a question that I ask guys, around the table. If I have a chance to have dinner with a group of guys or with a group of couples, rather than bore one another with each other, I toss out a question that dislodges all kinds of conversations because you can be eating dinner with heroes and never know it.

The question is this: “Out of everything you’ve done, in all the world, in your lifetime, what is the most courageous thing you have ever done?” I’ve heard of guys who grabbed grenades out of the air and threw them back at the enemy; others who
confronted a father around an addiction—an affair. Others who have broken ties with their father to move out of the family business to go do what they wanted to do. Heroic courage: still, yet, others—confessing an affair to a spouse and asking for a second chance. Last spring, I shared this message with a group of pastors. A Washington, DC, pastor came up and said, “The most courageous thing I’ve ever done is forgive the man who murdered my 35-year-old son.” [Audience moaning]

What’s the most courageous thing you’ve ever done? People’s response usually is, “I’ve never done anything courageous.” All that states is—that really reveals that you don’t know what courage is because courage is not always found on a battlefield. Courage is doing your duty, in the face of fear. It’s doing what’s expected of you, regardless of the obstacles, regardless of the fear that you may be feeling.

Well, if I was having dinner with a bunch of Old Testament saints, one of the guys I would love to have a conversation with would have been Joshua. I want to just visit a passage of Scripture with you that has, within it, some components of where you and I can find courage for this hour in which we live—for the issues that you face—that you’re going to leave here and encounter as you go back to reality.

Joshua, Chapter 1, verse 1:

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord the Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, “Moses, My servant, is dead. Now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to you, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

“From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

“Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses My servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.

“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way
prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be frightened; do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

If we were seated, across the table from Joshua, Joshua is going to recount, I think, at least three things, from this passage, where he learned how to be courageous. First, courage comes from fulfilling God’s mission—not just anybody’s mission—God’s mission. And if you know you are in the midst of doing what God has for you to do, then my friend, you can take on the giants.

Here’s the question: “Do you know what God’s mission is for your life?” Because—if you know that, you can handle a lot of giants! But if you forget who God is, if you forget His mission for you, and if you forget what He’s done for you—you’re not only going to suffer from spiritual amnesia and who God is—you’re going to move into unbelief; and you’re, ultimately, going to become a politically-incorrect word—a coward. We don’t talk much about that these days. What’s your mission?

Secondly, courage comes from obeying God’s Word. Courage comes from obeying God’s Word. Joshua, Chapter 1, verse 7, says it multiple times: “Don’t turn from it to the right or the left, that you may have good success.” “Meditate on it.” “Be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous, then you’ll have good success.” God’s calling Joshua to obey the Word.

I have a strange tradition—habit—just something that I do, that I’ve done for years. Ecclesiastes 7 says, “It’s good to go to the house of mourning because, in the end, the living take it to heart.” So, in the front of my Bible, I’ve almost always got a funeral program in the front of it because that’s the end of all of us. It helps me remember that this life is transient.

This one is from my friend, Chuck Colson. Barbara and I went to the Washington Cathedral. There, at the Washington Cathedral, we, along with about 4,000 other people, celebrated Chuck Colson’s life and heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached, clearly, in that huge church. This has a picture of Chuck on the front. On the back, it has Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” And then, there is a quote by Chuck on this little card, “Remain at your post and do your duty, for the glory of God and His Kingdom.” He spoke to us all. Chuck was a man who believed in the truth of this Book. He upheld it.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you are going to survive, in this culture and the coming culture, you have to know the playbook. You’ve got to know the truth of this Book because the world will massage you, and it will form you, and shape you into a replica of itself. We don’t need any more worldly Christians. We have enough of them! We need a few who will stand strong and stubbornly on the Scriptures, with a loving heart.
I’m going to tell you something. I’m not going to mention the issue. I’ve said it on the radio, but I’ve been really good at pointing my bony finger at sinners and people who have done certain sins—judging them in my heart—until God enabled me to live enough life and showed me the wickedness of my own heart to go, “What in the world are you doing pointing any fingers?”—and instead, realizing, that when people aren’t believers, “What else are they going to do?”

I wish you guys could have been here earlier. Some of you were. I sat right here; Bob sat right here. This is earlier this afternoon. We interviewed a couple who went to a *Weekend to Remember* in Pennsylvania—two attorneys, who started their relationship in an affair, ashamed. Neither one knew Christ. Both became believers in Christ, unknown to the other. Their lives began to change. They went to the *Weekend to Remember*—they got a game plan. They’ve now hosted *The Art of Marriage®* for 100 people. Two years ago, they got others scheduled; and now, instead of being divorce attorneys—where it’s a rubber stamp and you move on—they’re calling people to reconciliation—first with God, and then with their spouse! [Applause] It’s going to be bad for their business; but I have to tell you something—if we’re going to take these ministries, these missions—we have to do it with love and grace in our hearts. Folks, we have enough issues, in this culture, that are burning—that demand Christian response and engagement—that demand that we speak the truth.

There is a young man here—actually not young—he’s older than 40—that I’ve been mentoring for ten years. I’m not going to mention his name. He knows who he is, who called me, back in May. He goes: “Dennis, I’m a pastor of a church of several thousand people. You know what’s just happened in politics and what’s happened in the culture about redefining marriage; and I can’t step back, with my people being completely confused and puzzled. I’m going to preach on marriage next Sunday, and I’m going to talk about it from the Scriptures. I want to do it in a loving way,” and he did. Courage that stands firm, that does it with a smile on his face. How else are we going to lead these people to Christ—who are coming out of these lifestyles? We have the hope. We don’t want to look like angry people at them. Scriptures—these words—God will give birth to courage in your soul, in your heart. It will give you the backbone to push back, with a smile on your face.

Third, courage comes from experiencing the presence of God. Courage comes from experiencing God’s presence. It’s said two times in this passage, one in Chapter 1, verse 5. It says: “Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.” It’s like—in the midst of three commands to be courageous—there’s a sandwich, here, on both sides of the passage. Look at verse 9: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, do not be dismayed, do not be filled with distress, do not take flight, do not abandon ship,”—that has meaning, here, as we sail into port—“Don’t go AWOL,”—as a dad, as a mom, as a husband, as a wife, as a grandfather, grandmother, as a friend. Realize God is with you. He’ll give you the wisdom. Why did God command Joshua to
be courageous and to realize He is with him?—because Joshua was about to encounter giants—real giants, huge guys. Some of us, here, have imagined giants—vain imaginations about things that never come to pass.

I think it’s interesting, in the Scriptures, when it speaks of giants—that there are 365 “fear not’s” in the Bible. “Fear not,”—one for every day of the year. Why do you think God gave us that?—because we’re scaredy cats. We need to be reminded that we should not fear. He is with us. Read this Book. Get this Book in your soul because these pages remind us, “God is here.” He is closer to you than your spouse. He is closer to you than your best friend. He is with you. Many of us know about God—many talk about God—but you know what? God doesn't want us to reduce Him to an intellectual compartment in our brain. He wants us to experience Him—walk with Him, talk with Him—and be a vessel that He fills with His Holy Spirit.

What are you facing, right now, that demands courage? What are you facing in your life—in your walk with God, right now? How about your marriage, with your spouse? What are you facing that demands courage?—with a child or your family? Do you have a prodigal? Yes, I know what that feels like. How about with your parents—maybe, a parent who is evil, who damaged you and is still trying to control you?—or with a sibling, an adult sibling? How about your work, in your neighborhood? Are there giants in your neighborhood that demand you to press into battle—that God has been working in your soul to get you out on the battlefield in your community?

Well, courage comes from fulfilling God’s mission, obeying God’s Word, and experiencing His presence. I want to ask you a question. Where have we heard this before? Can you think of a passage, in the New Testament, where we’ve heard those three things—where we’ve heard a mission, where we’ve heard a command to obey, and where we’ve been promised His presence?

Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’”—there’s the mission—“...‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.’” You have to have the disease first; then you teach others. “‘And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

[Studio]

Bob: A great reminder, a great call to courage—a message that we heard—well, it was actually three weeks ago that we were getting off the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise. That was kind of our send-off message on Thursday night. If our listeners are interested in the entire message, it’s available on audio CD; and you can go to our website. All of the cruise messages are in a CD set. You can order it from us when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY and find out more about the CDs.
I’ll tell you, the messages are just a portion of what is the complete cruise experience. I hope our listeners will consider a special investment in your marriage. I know it’s a special investment for a lot of folks. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime getaway for you, as a couple; but part of life is making memories like this. Dennis—

**Dennis:** It really is. Bob, I left that event thinking: “You know what? FamilyLife knows how to put on an event—that goes for five days—that really is an adventure, that’s fun, that has enormous spiritual benefits to individuals, to marriages, to families—really helping couples recalibrate. I know it occurs onboard a ship on the ocean; but it really is a little bit like an island of clarity, in the midst of this culture of confusion, today.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Dennis:** I just think if folks have never done anything like this for your marriage, you need to come and join us next year. I promise you, you’re going to have a week to remember.

**Bob:** You really are. You get completely unplugged from life.

**Dennis:** Even Bob! Even Bob gave up his cell phone. It was amazing!

**Bob:** Because the charges—I mean, out there in the ocean? Forget it.

**Dennis:** He had his hand against his ear. It was like withdrawal.

**Bob:** [Laughing] That is right. If you want to find out more, if you want to get signed up for the 2014 *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise, go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click on the link you find there. The prices for the cruise are going to go up on March 15th. So, if you sign up now—you not only get the lower rates, you also get a certificate to attend a *Weekend to Remember* marriage getaway, as a special bonus. You can pass that on to somebody you know, or you can use it for your own marriage.

So, plan to join us next year—Dennis and Barbara, Mary Ann and me, Dr. Gary Chapman is going to be there. Crawford and Karen Loritts will be with us. We’ll hear from Chris August, and Building 429, and Laura Story, and Nicole C. Mullen, and FFH. We have a great lineup of musicians who will be with us. Find out more. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click on the link you see there, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY and join us for the *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise.

And with that, we have to wrap things up for this week. Thanks for being with us. Hope you have a great weekend. Hope you and your family are able to worship together in church this weekend. I hope you can join us on Monday, when we’ll introduce you to a couple who decided, a number of years ago, that they were going to open up their home and enlarge—not only their living space—but enlarge their hearts, as well. You’ll meet Mike and Sharon Dennehy. We’ll hear about their three biological kids and about the
nine kids they’ve adopted, all of whom have special needs. That comes up Monday. Hope you can join us.

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. See you back next time for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

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