Bob: Although he was a young husband and father, Bill Rose found that he liked partying and cocaine better than being married. As a result, Bill and Vicki Rose’s marriage was headed toward a divorce. But it never really got there.

Bill: It was, actually, in that room with the divorce attorneys—I’m not sure exactly what I said, but I said something to the effect—was, you know, “We may be divorced, but you'll always be my wife.”

Vicki: He did. At that point, I had come to know the Lord. I'm thinking: "Oh, my gosh! I've just been studying the Scriptures on marriage—'Be married once and only.' He doesn't even know the Lord, and he's speaking Scripture to me,” because that’s what I was starting to realize God wanted.

Bill: And I had no interest in knowing the Lord; and I truly thought this would be a very quick, passing deal.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Tuesday, February 11th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. How do you hang onto a marriage when your husband has moved out and cares more about his cocaine habit? We'll hear Bill and Vicki Rose’s story today. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Tuesday edition. You know, we have seen and talked to a lot of couples who have been at a pretty low point in their marriage—in their relationship—for whatever reason. But we’ve been introduced to a couple, this week, who came to a point in their relationship—and most couples who get here—there is no hope. There is no hope in coming back from this kind of a brink. But, as we'll hear today, this is a couple who found a way back.

Dennis: Well, they did; but it was a dangerous brink. As we're about to hear, this is quite a story. As we heard, earlier, Bill and Vicki Rose have quite a drama that started out in New York City. Bill was an owner in the New York Yankees—still is today. In fact, he's got one of the biggest rings I think I've ever seen. You could use that thing as brass knuckles.

Bill: You haven't seen the Florida Marlin ring. It is three times this size.
Bob: Oh, my goodness!

Dennis: You need two hands to put that on—if it's three times that size—that's all I can say. He runs a sports management firm called DRM, and he's the CEO of that. Vicki, along with Bill, is on the Board of Directors of Pro Athletes Outreach, which is a very effective ministry. It's been around for more than three decades. She is a teacher, a writer, and speaker. Together, they have two adult children who just recently got married.

Bob: And they went on their first date at Yankee Stadium and had a whirlwind season together before you popped the question on the way to a Red Sox game; right?

Bill: That's right.

Bob: And got married. Vicki, you were working at Saks, as a buyer for Saks Fifth Avenue. You were living the New York party lifestyle, which began to drive a wedge in your relationship, as we've already heard this week. You were doing lines of coke together. You quit, at one point. This was before you had children; right?

Vicki: Yes.

Bob: And then the kids came along. Bill, you didn't quit.

Bill: No.

Bob: You kept partying—

Dennis: In fact, Bill, I wanted to ask you a question about that. You mentioned, earlier, that you were taking up to four grams of cocaine a day.

Bill: Yes, but that was a—understand that—

Bob: That was not a daily—

Bill: I put that in because that was probably the highest that ever happened.

Dennis: You were really addicted, at that point.

Bill: But, you know, I was probably doing one gram a day, on an average.

Dennis: You know, help me understand something. I'm not asking you to name names, but how does this happen? Where do you get this stuff—that it's so accessible? I mean, some of us, who didn't experience the drug culture—okay, we hear these stories; and we go: "How does that occur? That's illegal."
Bill: It was all over the place. I mean, you could get whatever you wanted from anybody. It's just not hard to find. Back then, it was really prevalent, as well, among athletes. So—

Bob: So somebody would just say to you, "Hey, you need some coke?"

Bill: Somebody would say, "You want some?" Everybody carried it. I mean, you went to a party—everybody had it.

Bob: A gram of coke would cost how much, back then?

Bill: About $100.

Bob: So this was—this was—

Dennis: Your habit was a minimum of $100 a day.

Bill: Yes; yes.

Dennis: Up to $400?

Bill: Up to $400.

Dennis: Wow. Well—

Bill: But don't forget—a lot of people would just give it to you because they wanted you to be part of the party and stuff. So, a lot of times you paid for nothing.

Dennis: Well, it was destroying your relationship—

Bill: It was; it did.

Dennis: Or, actually, it had destroyed your relationship. Vicki, you drew a line in the sand, in 1986, and said, "I'm outta here."

Vicki: I asked him to leave, actually.

Bill: I was the one that was “outta here.”

Dennis: Yes.

Vicki: I said: “I really can’t live like this, with the children, and you doing this. I love you, but I need you to leave—get your life cleaned up. Hopefully, you will.”
**Dennis:** How hard was that to do for you?

**Vicki:** Oh, it was the hardest thing I'd ever done. All I thought about was how to fix this situation—how, if it wouldn't fix—if I would separate from Billy, how I would survive, as a mom, alone with two kids. I just didn't know how we would go on, and I couldn't live the way we were living anymore.

**Bob:** And when you drew the line and said, "You're outta here," did you know, at that point, how you were going to pay the rent, at the end of the month?

**Vicki:** I had no idea about anything.

**Bob:** So, it was—

**Vicki:** And Billy really—it's not that he went happily—but he knew, really, that it was time—that it was going to be done.

**Bob:** So, did you just pack your bags and say, "Alright."

**Bill:** I did.

**Vicki:** Pretty willingly.

**Bill:** Pretty willingly—I mean, because what was happening was—with her not doing what I was doing, she was sort of putting a crimp in my lifestyle.

**Vicki:** I was angry at him all the time. I had expectations, every day, for just a little window—a little glimmer of hope—that the person that I loved and married would show up; and he didn't anymore. I was—every day, disappointed—every day, making excuses—like my parents would say, "Come for dinner," you know. It would be dinnertime; and Billy would say, you know, "I can't go." And so, I'd make some excuse, you know: "He has a cold." "He doesn't feel well." My life was just—I felt like I was just being dishonest, every day of my life.

**Bob:** So, the separation begins. As far as you're concerned, is the marriage over? You never filed for divorce; right?

**Vicki:** We tried.

**Bill:** We got probably the highest profile divorce attorney—if not in the country, certainly in the state of New York—probably, the country.

**Dennis:** What did you think about that, Vicki?
Vicki: It was silly because we really didn't have a lot of assets between us. I knew it was a move to try to scare me. I mean, it had been written up in the newspaper that Billy was in a restaurant with another girl. Even my dear father and stepmother sat me down and said: "Now, you should get back together because he can find another girl easily; but you're 35, and you have two children. It won't be so easy for you to remarry." It was just like a scare tactic to me.

Dennis: You were separated for five-and-a-half years.

Vicki: Yes.

Bill: It was, actually, in that room with the divorce attorneys—I'm not sure exactly what I said, but I said something to the effect—was, you know, "We may be divorced, but you'll always be my wife."

Vicki: He did. At that point, I had come to know the Lord. I don't think he said anything about divorce. I think he said something more like, "No matter what, you'll always be my wife." I'm thinking: "Oh, my gosh! I've just been studying the Scriptures on marriage—‘Be married once and only.’ He doesn't even know the Lord, and he's speaking Scripture to me,” because that's what I was starting to realize God wanted us to do.

Bill: And I had no interest in knowing the Lord. We went to dinner, one night, to talk about the kids. This is one of my favorite stories. There's a restaurant in New York—it's in a Billy Joel song—called Elaine's. We sit down; we're having dinner.

Vicki: This is during the time we're separated.

Bill: Vicki tells me about her new-found faith. Vicki has always been a very black-and-white person. We're getting a little more gray into her life—you know, thanks to me—but—

Dennis: After how many years?

Bill: After 31, but we're—we're—we're—

Dennis: You've been working on it.

Bill: I am working on it hard.

Dennis: There you go.

Bill: And so she's telling me about her new-found faith, which I just think is one of her passing fads. She's telling me—that if I don't believe what she believes, and my parents don't believe what she believes—that I'm going to hell. My father is going to hell. My mother is—we're all perishing. I looked at her; and I said: "Vick, that's great; but, you
know, my God is a lot more benevolent than that. I just don't see that at all." And just never got it and never—

Bob: Vicki, I want to take you back to—before this dinner with your husband, where you are sharing about perdition—"How did you first hear the gospel? and, “What was the point that you became a Christian?"

Vicki: About a year-and-a-half into our separation, I had just gone back to work. I was at Macy's & Company as a corporate buyer. I had just returned from a trip to all across the Far East—Hong Kong, and Taipei. I'd landed in the hospital with an infected finger. I came home from the hospital. There was an invitation, on the front hall table, inviting me to a dinner party to hear Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hodel—Secretary and Mrs. Donald Hodel—share about Christianity in the world today. On the bottom, it said, "Black tie."

I thought: "Oh, wow! This is an opportunity to get dressed up and go out to dinner." I was a single mom for a year-and-a-half—little opportunity to do that. I went to this dinner party. I heard the Hodel's share their life story, in fact. They shared some things that really paralleled my life with Billy. They explained, in their story, how they had been churchgoers; but it was just a social act, which paralleled my life.

They shared how their neighbors, when their son committed suicide, took them to a church where they heard the Bible taught. They heard, for the first time, that God loved them and had a plan for their life—but that they were separated from God because of what the Bible calls sin—and that Jesus Christ is the bridge and the only way to be rejoined to God—and that we can simply ask Him into our lives.

Then, at the end of their talk, they offered us an opportunity to do that—to ask Jesus Christ into our lives—to begin that relationship with God. I prayed and asked Jesus Christ into my life at that dinner party. There were 900 people at the Waldorf Astoria, and it was November 1987.

Bob: You were there by yourself?

Vicki: I was there by myself.

Bob: And the message just rang to the point that, when everybody bowed their head, you said, "I need this."

Vicki: Yes, absolutely. I can't tell you that bells went off or anything dramatically changed, at that moment; but I knew when I walked out that night that something had changed. When Billy and I first separated, his mom—actually, the day after we separated, took me to an Al-Anon meeting. I had started to learn about turning my life over to a higher power, as I know Him. In Al-Anon, they don’t—they just talk about a higher power.
I had spent a year-and-a-half going to meetings because I found some relief there for the first time. I had known *nothing* about addiction. I knew nothing about its best friend—co-dependency. Going to Al-Anon meetings really started to give me some relief from the craziness in my brain and in my life.

**Bob:** So, when you heard the gospel, you said—

**Vicki:** “That's the missing piece of the puzzle.”

**Bob:** That's the higher power.

**Vicki:** Yes, I knew that Jesus Christ was the higher power and the missing part of the puzzle. Finally, there just started to be a calm for the first time—I think, ever, probably.

**Dennis:** You all ended up being separated, as we mentioned, for five-and-a-half years. This is early in the separation.

**Vicki:** That's right.

**Dennis:** Now, Billy, I know you're not going to remember where you were the night she went to the Waldorf Astoria and heard the gospel; but, generally, what was your life consisting of at those moments?

**Bill:** I'm sure I was at the restaurant. I was there for usually about 15 hours a day; and probably, after I got out of the restaurant, would then go to some after-hours place and come home at 8/9 in the morning—the sun was up.

**Dennis:** So, you were just continuing the party lifestyle.

**Bill:** I was.

**Dennis:** You had no idea of the meeting she attended?

**Bill:** None.

**Bob:** Do you remember when you first heard that Vicki got religion?

**Bill:** Well, I mean, it was either at Elaine's that night at dinner, or I was home.

**Vicki:** I can remember very clearly.

**Bill:** I was home with the—I remember being home with the kids one night.

**Vicki:** At our apartment.
Bill: Yes. You came home, and I was watching the Yankee game. They were losing or something bad happened. I probably said a word I should not have said. All of a sudden, out of her mouth is, "We don't use those words anymore in this house." I'm going: "Excuse me? What is that about?!" [Laughter]

Vicki: And then, I shared the “Four Laws” with him. I remember that very clearly, in our apartment.

Bob: You got out the booklet and went through, page by page, with him?

Vicki: I did. Well, I was in training to learn how to use the “Four Laws”. I—actually, at my office, I went to all the cubicles and said: "I'm in a class. I'd like to learn how to share this. Can I do it?" It was just natural that I desperately wanted to share it with Billy, most of all.

Bob: And were you thinking, "She has flipped out"?

Bill: I truly thought this would be a very quick, passing deal.

Bob: Yes, but it wasn't.

Bill: No, it was not!

Bob: And as you continued to party, and she continued to grow spiritually, and your paths continued to intersect, what were you thinking about the fact that this was sticking with her?

Dennis: Well, before you get there, I have to ask Vicki, at this point: "Did you begin to notice your attitude toward him changing and your ability to love him, in the midst of his brokenness, Vicki?"

Vicki: Well, what happened is—yes. About six months after I prayed to ask Christ into my life, the ministry offered a seminar—a weekend seminar on singles and dating. I was, like: “Okay, here I am. I'm single,” as I thought, “and I'm now a Christian. I'd like to learn how to properly date.”

I went to the seminar. It was taught by a Christian counselor. What I learned was—I was not single in the eyes of God. As long as I wasn't divorced from my husband, I was still married, actually, in God's eyes. I was not eligible to date, at all.

I made an appointment to see the guy—the Christian counselor—a week later because I really wanted clarification. I said: “You've got to be kidding me. You know, Billy is living two blocks away from us with another woman. We've been separated for two years,” or two-and-a-half years, by then. “You mean I can't date? I'm not…” He took me to
different Scriptures and explained how one night of pleasure with a date would be very displeasing to God.

**Dennis:** And you also had a guy who had asked you to go to the Philharmonic at some point? Wasn't there a guy that asked you out?

**Vicki:** He was a great guy—really great-looking guy—and a really nice guy at Bible study, who was a believer. He asked me out, and I actually accepted the date. About three minutes later, I hung up the phone; and I realized: "There's no way I can do that. There's no way I want to do something that I know is displeasing to God."

**Bob:** When you had some people in the church saying: "Oh, yes, do it—divorce him. Get on with your life;" right?

**Vicki:** Well, the counselor that I went to—he said: “You have every right to divorce. I think, at this point, you’re being co-dependent. You should divorce Billy and get on with your life.” And so, I went to my pastor. He basically said the same thing. So, I went to one more; and he said the same thing.

**Bob:** So what kept you married if you've got all these guys, who are saying: "Hey, you've got the ‘Get out of jail free’ card." Then you can go on your dates to the Philharmonic and be happy.

**Vicki:** Right—reading the Word of God and starting to see what God said about marriage and divorce, and the first thing was that it says God hates divorce. I didn't want to divorce him because I wanted to be married. I wanted to please God, and I did not feel God's peace. I did not feel—as much as three different Christian authority figures said, “Yes, you can,”— in my heart of hearts, with what the Scripture said, I didn't feel the freedom to do that.

**Bob:** I'm just amazed at your tenacity and your dedication to do what the Scriptures said when everything in you was going: "But I want a husband. I want out. I want something, and I don't have it."

**Dennis:** Well, and she needed a father to the children, too. You're a single-parent mom, at that point.

**Vicki:** I had spent 35 years of my life—I prayed to receive Christ in November of my 34th year—so doing everything my own way. I had wanted to be rich and famous. I wanted my life to have significance. You know, I'd married this guy—we were doing all these fancy things, and it had gotten me deep into a mess. I had really planned it all out, in a sense; and it had not led down a good road, at all.
I was at the place where I realized who God was—to the extent that I did at that time—how great He was, and completely powerful, and merciful, and loving. I wanted it His way. I did not want my own way anymore.

**Dennis:** You know, what we're hearing today are two stories—a story of hope that you represent, Vicki—and another life that you were living, Bill—that was still on a course to destruction. But because you, Vicki, did what Bob was talking about—you were courageous, you were steadfast, you hung in there. God used you to help get that message through to your husband.

**Bob:** Yes, we haven't heard the end of the story yet.

**Dennis:** We haven't; we haven't. As you were talking, I was just thinking: "Here is what Billy is seeing, and here is what you're experiencing—Second Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he [or she], is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."

**Vicki:** It's the first verse I memorized.

**Dennis:** That's the picture of what happens when Jesus Christ *invades* a person's soul. Christ didn't come to be a spare tire. He didn't come to be a hitchhiker. He came to be the driver. He came to be the One who sets the course. Like you said, Vicki, you'd been doing it your own way. Now you had the chance to do it His way and let Him direct your life.

I happen to believe we're talking to someone, right now, who is in a marriage like this or, maybe, just a single person who is lost and who needs the Savior. It's just as simple as how Vicki described it. You turn from yourself. You turn from being a lawbreaker, and you turn to the One who can forgive. That's the One who paid the price for our sins, Jesus Christ. And because He's alive from the dead, He can enter our lives if we'll express our faith in Him and receive Him as our Savior, and Lord, and Master.

**Bob:** And it really is as simple, Dennis, as somebody sensing that God is stirring in their heart—in their spirit—and they cry out to Him. They say: “I acknowledge my sin. I recognize that I have been in rebellion against You and Your ways. I've ignored You. I've lived life the way I thought was best, without any regard for what You want, and I'm ready to make a change. I'm ready to turn. I'm ready to follow You and obey You.”

Go to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. On our website, you will see a link there that says, “TWO WAYS TO LIVE.” That link explains to you what it means to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Again, go to FamilyLifeToday.com and read through that. Then, let us know if we can help you in your spiritual journey as you turn away from sin and as you turn toward Christ.
Dennis, I want to quickly remind folks that this weekend, Valentine’s weekend, we’re going to have a lot of people, all across the country, who are, not only investing in their marriage, but who are building a marriage based on the kind of spiritual foundation we talked about today. We have our Weekend to Remember™ marriage getaway season kicking off this weekend. You and I are going to be in Hershey, Pennsylvania, together. There are other getaways happening this weekend, in cities around the country. Then, throughout the spring, we have a complete lineup of Weekend to Remember marriage getaways.

This weekend, there are hundreds of churches that are hosting an Art of Marriage® video event for couples. Many of those churches have let us know that they would love to have our listeners join them for this event. So, you can go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Click on the link you see there; and there’s a map that will show you where The Art of Marriage is taking place in cities, all across the US, this weekend. You can pick a location, get in touch with them, and say, “Hey, we’d like to come.” I’m sure they’d love to have you join them for The Art of Marriage this weekend. Again, get more information, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com.

If you don’t see an Art of Marriage near where you live, you can host one in your local church, in a community center—wherever it makes sense to do it. We’ve been hearing about business owners who are hosting an Art of Marriage weekend for their employees, as an employee benefit, and finding it to be a great way to share the gospel with their staff. Again, if you’d like to find out more about how to host an Art of Marriage event, go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Click on the link you see there for The Art of Marriage, and get more information about how you can host this Friday night/Saturday video event in your community or in your local church.

At FamilyLife, we want to see every home become a godly home. That presumes that moms and dads, husbands and wives, and children all understand who Jesus is—all understand the gospel—and have all committed their lives to obedience to Him.

We are listener-supported. More than 60 percent of the money that it takes to run this ministry comes from donations from folks, just like you. If you can make a donation, right now, we’d like to send you a thank-you gift. We’ll send you Dennis and Barbara Rainey’s book on romance in marriage called Rekindling the Romance. All you have to do is go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Click on the link that says, “I CARE”. Make an online donation, and we’ll ship a copy of the book to you. Or you can request the book when you make a donation by phone. Call 1-800-FL-TODAY. Make your donation over the phone and ask for the book on romance. You can also request a copy of the book when you send a donation through the mail. Our mailing address is: P O Box 7111, Little Rock, AR. Our zip code is 72223. Again, ask for a copy of the book, Rekindling the Romance, when you write to us.
And be sure to join us back again tomorrow. We’re going to hear about how things began to change for Bill and Vicki Rose after Bill put his faith in Christ. It was slow. It didn’t happen overnight, as you’ll hear tomorrow.

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 tomorrow for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas.
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