Bob: There was a pivotal year in Dennis and Barbara Rainey’s marriage. The year was 1976—it was a year of challenge.

Dennis: We had financial crisis, emotional crisis, and physical crisis—all those issues swirling around our lives—bombarding our union / our marriage. There was no romance—little feelings for one another. There was a lot of pain. All we had was this Book, and the God of this Book, and a commitment to Him that we had made in 1972, on September 2nd, that said, “…’til death do us part.”

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, April 11th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. Where does a couple find the strength to persevere in marriage, even in the midst of hard times? We’ll hear from Dennis Rainey about that today. Stay tuned.

1:00

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Friday edition. You know, it’s been exciting this week. We’ve had a lot of our listeners who have been coming to a new website that we’ve got up called IStillDo.com. They are hearing about these events that are coming up in August and October.

I know spring has just kind of sprung. People are thinking, “August and October sounds like it’s a long way away”; but folks are pretty excited about the one-day event for marriage that we’re going to be hosting in Chicago, on August 2nd, at the Allstate Arena; in Portland, on August 23rd, at the Moda Center; and in Washington, DC, on October 4th, at the Verizon Center downtown—that event is going to be a worldwide simulcast.

2:00

We are standing up to say: “Marriage is a good thing.” We think we need to celebrate that.

Dennis: People are expressing interest about it in increasing numbers. And Bob, I think it is proving what I feel like is true across the country—that there are a number of folks
who really do want to stand up and be counted on behalf of how God designed marriage and the family.

**Bob:** And that’s what this one-day event is—it’s really all about. It’s about saying: “Marriage matters to us. Marriage matters to our culture—it matters in our world. It’s a part of God’s design, and it’s something to be celebrated.” And there really is great delight when a husband and a wife say, “I do,” and when they say, “I still do.”

**Dennis:** I think you’re right, Bob. In fact, what we’re trying to do is give people a chance to come join together—much as we did about a dozen years ago—and just come, and sing some great worship hymns, and have a lot of fun—a lot of entertainment—

3:00

—but hear some good biblical teaching on marriage and family—some practical projects that you’ll be able to take home and that will equip you as you fulfill your marriage promise.

Then, Bob, I think just have the satisfaction of knowing that your voice, along with tens of thousands of others, is going to collectively be heard and seen in that arena and beyond that arena. I think it’s going to spill over to our communities after these events are over. I want to see a time when we start a national dialogue about what Christian marriage is all about and how our God designed it in the first place.

**Bob:** Well, certainly, there has been a political dialogue on this subject. We want to have a spiritual dialogue on this subject and say,—

**Dennis:** Isn’t that novel?

**Bob:** —“Let’s look at what the Bible has to say rather than just your opinion versus my opinion.” And I’ll tell you—folks are getting excited about this. In fact, you should go to the website, IStillDo.com—

4:00

—and see some of the wedding pictures folks have posted.

**Dennis:** There are some funny ones on there—[Laughter]

**Bob:** There are.

**Dennis:** —including with yours and mine.

**Bob:** There are also—we’re capturing some honeymoon horror stories and wedding day disaster stories. Some of those are pretty funny, as well. In fact, at the “I Still Do”™
one-day events in Chicago, and Portland, and Washington, DC, we may have some special awards that we hand out in those cities for some of these pictures and some of these stories that we are getting on the website at IStillDo.com.

I want our listeners to hear you and your wife talking about the importance of a rooted, and grounded, and biblically-nurtured marriage relationship. This is a message that you shared when we were with tens of thousands of people in an arena, a number of years ago, talking about why marriage really does matter. And it's really at the heart of what we're going to be talking about at "I Still Do."

5:00

Let's listen together. Here are Dennis and Barbara Rainey.

[Recorded Message]

Dennis: Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." Is that a picture of you right now? Are you at a crossroads? Have you come here seeking hope and help? Well, you know what? We know where that hope is.

Someone once asked the question: "Is there anything more beautiful in life than a young boy and girl, clasping clean hands and a pure heart, in the path of marriage? Can there be anything more beautiful than young love?" The answer is given: "Yes, there is a more beautiful thing. It's the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled,—

6:00

—but still clasped. Their faces are seamed, but still radiant. Their hearts physically tired and bowed, but still strong in love and devotion for one another. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love—old love." What's going to make the difference in your life and your marriage, going the distance, 'till death do you part?

The year was 1976. Barbara and I had two children under two years of age. We had just moved into a house and had changed jobs for the fifth time in six years—five moves, new friends, new churches. We moved into a house—where we’d been cheated out of several thousand dollars—dirty and filthy.

7:00

And in the midst of cleaning up that house, the phone call rang on Sunday morning. It was my brother’s voice over the phone. His voice was chilling over that telephone, saying that my dad had died. After that, my son was diagnosed with a need for surgery; and so, at one year of age, we took him for surgery. Not more than ten days after we got him home from surgery, the phone rang. My brother had had an apparent heart
attack, and they needed me to go back and run the family propane business in the midst of the worst winter in Midwest history.

A couple of months later, I was late for work. For some reason that day, I hadn’t gone to work—stayed home and lingered a little longer. All of a sudden, Barbara stuck her head down between her knees and said her heart was racing fast. We called the Emergency—the ambulance rushed over—got her. We ran to the hospital, where she was entered into the cardiac unit and registered more than 300 beats a minute.

8:00

Her heart continued to race, uncontrollably, all day. At noon, her lungs began to fill up with fluid. The doctors did not know what to do. All afternoon, with no friends in that waiting area, I prayed. At exactly four o’clock, the doctors had just left to go stop her heart with electric shock; but they didn’t need to because God put His finger back on the heart problem. She didn’t die. [Applause]

But for the next few—for the next few months, she had extra heartbeats. I had extra heartbeats. The kids had extra heartbeats. Then, we found out, at the end of 30 days, that she was pregnant. We wondered: “Would she be able to give birth to a healthy son?” Some nine months later, she gave birth to Samuel, which means “Because we asked of God.”

Now, I want to tell you—in the 12- to 18-month time period that I’ve just described—where we had financial crisis, emotional crisis, physical crisis—all those issues swirling around our lives—

9:00

—bombarding our union / our marriage—there was no romance / little feelings for one another. There was a lot of pain. All we had was this Book, and the God of this Book, and a commitment to Him that we had made in 1972, on September 2nd, that said, “til death do us part.”

Some of you, here, are in the middle of pain. Your marriage has come through enormous trial, and you are in need of reducing your life back to the basics and finding life from the life-giver, Jesus Christ. Everybody in this auditorium today has a choice. You’re going to leave here with a choice. Jesus spoke of this choice in a parable in the Sermon on the Mount. He said this—

10:00

—Matthew 7, verses 24 and following: “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came and the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and yet, it did not fall because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these
words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain came and the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and it fell,” Jesus said, “with a great crash.”

Interesting parable—two foundations—sand and rock—two builders of homes—foolish and wise.

11:00

Two responses: disobedience to Jesus’ words and obedience. Two legacies—one whose house ended with a crash and great was its fall—another one that withstood the floods and was permanent / resilient—the strength of a nation. One common ingredient to both houses—rain, floods and wind. The question is: “What kind of foundation will you build your house on?” A better question might be: “If your life ended right now, what would they say was your legacy?” Would it be that of strength or that of destruction and despair?

In our remaining time,—

12:00

—I want to give you five ways that your marriage can go the distance—five ways to live together in a satisfying relationship—“‘til death do you part.”

Number one: Pray together every day, as a couple. Tonight, make it the beginning, for the rest of your married life, that you covenant together, as a couple, that you will pray together.

The second way to divorce-proof your marriage and to make your marriage “until death do us part” is to repent from divorce. Malachi, Chapter 2, verse 16—God does not stutter—He says, “For I hate divorce.” God hates it. What should we think of it? And so I challenge you—as you leave here today: “Would you repent, with me, from divorce?” We will never see Christian marriages be strong, and be the beacon and the lighthouse that it needs to be until you—

13:00

—that’s not us, on the podium—until you, in the church pew, stand up and fight for families, and go and do battle on behalf of someone who wants to just get out of marriage! [Applause] It’s too easy to get a divorce today!

Number one: Pray together every night. Number two: Repent from divorce. Number three: I want to challenge you to sign the marriage covenant that you’re about to receive as you leave the door in a few moments. I want to challenge you to hang it in your
home. Marriage is one man / one woman in a covenant relationship with their God for a lifetime.

The fourth thing: Do what you promised. Be faithful. In a word—persevere—just be faithful.

Fifth: I want to challenge you—number five—

14:00

—to equip other couples to keep their marriage covenants. Every one of us, as couples in this arena, needs a mission. I charge you, in the presence of God: “Redeem your neighborhoods. Redeem your communities for Jesus Christ.” You are a warrior, not merely on behalf of your family, but you are a protector of the families of your community. May God’s favor be upon you.

For 22 years, Robertson McQuilkin served as the president of Columbia Bible College and Seminary. In 1984, his wife—Muriel’s health began to deteriorate with Alzheimer’s disease. She began to lose her basic speech skills. She couldn’t reason, feed herself, [or] clothe herself. She would wander away from their home and get lost in the neighborhood. And so in 1990,—

15:00

—Robertson McQuilkin, as the President of Columbia Bible College and Seminary, stood before the student body, announcing his resignation, as President, to go home and care for his wife of more than 40 years, Muriel.

We have obtained an audio of that resignation speech—just about 110 seconds’ worth. I want you to listen and read the caption because these words, I believe, are one of the most powerful, profound, living illustrations of being a covenant-keeper that you and I will ever have the privilege of hearing and witnessing.

[Robertson’s Resignation Speech]

Robertson: I haven’t, in my life, experienced easy decision-making on major decisions; but one of the simplest and clearest decisions I’ve had to make is this one because circumstances dictated it.

16:00

Muriel, now, in the last couple of months seems to be almost happy when with me and almost never happy when not with me. In fact, she seems to feel trapped—becomes very fearful, sometimes almost terror. And when she can’t get to me, there can be anger and distress; but when I’m with her, she’s happy and contented.
So, I must be with her at all times; and, you see, it’s not only that I promised, “in sickness and in health...‘till death do us part”—and I’m a man of my word—but as I have said—I don’t know with this group, but I have said publicly—“It’s the only fair thing. She sacrificed for me for 40 years to make my life possible.”

17:00

So, if I cared for her for 40 years, I’d still be in debt. However, there’s much more. It’s not that I have to, but I get to. I love her very dearly, and you can tell it’s not easy to talk about. She’s a delight. What a great honor to care for such a wonderful person.

[End of Resignation Speech] [Applause]

Barbara: I was standing in the laundry room, and I was ironing. [Emotion in voice] Dennis called—[I'm sorry]—he called on the phone, and he read me that story. I was watering the clothes—

18:00

—like I’m watering my notes, right now. And he said, “Should I tell that story?” And I said, “Yes.” I said, “I just have one question. I need to know—will you love me like that?” And he said, “Yes.”

There’s not a woman in this room who doesn’t want to know the answer to that question. There’s not a woman in this room who doesn’t need to hear from her husband, “Yes, I will love you like that.” That is a demonstration of commitment and of covenant. It’s what we were made for. It’s what we long for. It’s what we need. God built it in us.

19:00

[Studio]

Bob: Well, that’s a powerful moment from one of the “I Still Do” marriage celebrations; and it was awfully quiet in that auditorium.

Dennis: She’s articulating what every woman wants to know: “If that happened to me—if I became ill / if I had a problem—will you, as my husband, lay down your life on my behalf and love me like that?”

It’s unfortunate—in our day and age—that that has become such a central question in the institution of marriage; but it has. And I’m just here to tell you that, as long as God gives FamilyLife the capability of reaching out, we’re going to help husbands and wives...
answer that question—and not just hang in there, by their fingernails, but help them thrive,—

20:00

—help them succeed, and build a vibrant, vital relationship that has something to share with other people that can be passed down to future generations.

I believe that what we’re doing at “I Still Do” is the most strategic response to this culture of divorce that we could possibly make, as a ministry. That’s why we want to invite you, as a listener, to pack in with a bunch of other couples in a bus, or a van, or in a car and come and say with us: “I still do.”

Bob: And folks are starting to hear the message. We’re starting to see some of the tickets for the August 2nd event, at the Allstate Arena in Chicago, are starting to sell—tickets for the August 23rd event, at the Moda Center in Portland, and even for October 4th in Washington, DC. This is reserved seating. So, folks who are saying, “We want the best seats,” are going online, right now, to IStillDo.com.

21:00

There are group rates available for those of you who want to pack into a bus, or a car, or a van, and join with other couples.

Spend the day listening to Dr. Al Mohler, the President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Crawford and Karen Loritts. David Nasser is going to be joining us. Dennis and Barbara Rainey are going to be speaking—Ron Deal, Shaunti Feldhahn—and a lunchtime concert by Andrew Peterson. It’s going to be a great day.

And if you go to IStillDo.com, not only is there information about the events, but you can also see wedding pictures of Dennis and Barbara Rainey. A lot of our listeners are starting to post their wedding pictures, as well. In fact, we’re looking for wedding pictures that may be a little out of the ordinary—maybe you’ve—I’ve got one. We put one up where all of the groomsmen—after the wedding was over—they took off their tuxedo pants and they put on tennis shorts. We’ve got a picture on the IStillDo.com website—

22:00

—of Mary Ann and me, and all of my groomsmen in their tennis shorts and tennis shoes, along with their tuxedo tops. It’s straight out the 1970s; okay?

So, add your picture when you go to IStillDo.com. Share with us your honeymoon horror story or your wedding day disaster story. Then, we’d love to know what song was the
song you fell in love to or the song you first danced to at your wedding. We’re starting to put together the ultimate marriage playlist at IStillDo.com.

So, come and find out more about tickets—order online. And if you have any questions, call 1-800- “F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then, the word, “TODAY.” We’ll see if we can answer any of those questions, and we hope you’ll come and join us at “I Still Do.”

Now, a quick word of thanks to all of you who help make FamilyLife Today possible. We are listener-supported. The cost of producing and syndicating this daily radio program is covered by folks, like you, who will either, each month,—

23:00

—as a Legacy Partner, make a contribution—or those of you who, from time to time, get in touch with us and let us know that you want to support what God is doing through the ministry of FamilyLife Today.

When you make a donation, right now, we’d like to send you three prayer cards. These prayer cards are designed to help you more effectively pray for one another in your family. There is one for a wife, one for a husband, one for parents to share as you pray for your children. We’ll send those out to you as our way of saying, “Thank you,” when you support FamilyLife Today with a donation.

You can donate, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the button in the upper right-hand side of the screen that says, “I Care”; or call 1-800-FL-TODAY and ask for the prayer cards when you get in touch with us to make that donation. Or you can write and request the prayer cards and make a donation by mail. Our mailing address is Post Office Box 7111, Little Rock, AR; and our zip code is 72223.

24:00

And with that, we’ve got to wrap things up for this week. Thanks for being with us. Hope you have a great weekend. Hope you and your family can worship together this weekend. And I hope you can join us back on Monday when we’ll introduce you to a young mother who tells a very compelling story of how she met God and also met her future husband while she was pursuing her Ph.D. at Oxford University. We’ll meet Carolyn Weber on Monday. Hope you can join 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 will see you back next time for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

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