Bob: Have you prayed for your marriage or for your family today? David Nasser says someone has.

David: Jesus has been praying for your marriage. Jesus has been praying for your prodigal child that you're losing sleep over. Jesus has been asking the Father on your behalf beyond stuff that you don’t even know how to ask for. Even when you didn’t know to pray, Jesus was—before you, after you, scattered, covered, smothered—asking God for you. Isn’t that assuring to know today? [Applause]

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Wednesday, July 22nd. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. The Bible says that we have an advocate before the Father who is always interceding for us. We'll hear about that from David Nasser today. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Wednesday edition. Have you ever been to Liberty University?

Dennis: I have not.

Bob: Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Dennis: I'd like to hear just a little of your Jerry Falwell—

Bob: [Impersonating Jerry] "My Jerry Falwell impression—this is how Dr. Falwell used to speak when he was training champions for Christ on Liberty Mountain."

Dennis: And we’re going to Liberty Mountain—[Laughter] —we’re going to hold I Still Do. We’re going to help some folks, not just be happily married, but be purposefully married and make a difference in their community.

Bob: Yes. The fun thing about this is while we are hosting this day—Saturday, October 17th, at the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg—we are going to have a crowd there, but we're also going to have thousands of folks joining us—tens of thousands of folks joining us—via simulcast. There are churches that have signed on to host the I Still Do event as a church simulcast in their church on Saturday, October 17th.
They’re going to get a chance to hear from you and Barbara. Crawford and Karen Loritts are going to be joining us. They’re going to hear from Alex Kendrick—

**Dennis:** Right.

**Bob:** —who’s going to be talking about the priority of prayer in marriage; and our friend, Alistair Begg, is going to be with us for the day as well. It’s going to be a great day.

If our listeners are interested in finding out how your church can participate in *I Still Do*, you can go to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the link that says, “GO DEEPER,” at the upper left-hand corner of the page. You’ll see the link for *I Still Do*. You can get your church signed up and have a one-day event for marriage in your local church.

**Dennis:** I want to encourage you to do that. I know of a church in eastern Washington that actually has overflow capacity. They’re expecting 1,400 people in their auditorium, and they have plans for another 500 folks to attend in another auditorium in their facility. They’re going to make it a major outreach for their community, just to say: “We still do—we’re for marriage. We believe, as God designed marriage, He knows how to make it work. It’s going to be a fun day, a romantic day, but also a purposeful day to equip you to know how to fulfill your marriage vows.”

**Bob:** Well, and you and I are going to get a chance to see our friend, David Nasser, who lives in Lynchburg. In fact, he is the Senior Vice-President for Spiritual Development at Liberty University. He was with us last year during our *I Still Do* events and gave a powerful message to the audience in Chicago. Actually, he texted me on the morning of *I Still Do*, at about six in the morning. He said, “Hey Bob, would it be okay if I changed my message for today? I just feel the Lord’s prompting me to speak on something different.” I thought—

**Dennis:** —“What do you say to that?”

**Bob:** I thought: “I’m going to trust David on this one; I’m going to trust the Holy Spirit in his life.” I think our listeners are going to understand as they hear from David Nasser today about what he shared with the audience, back at the *I Still Do*, even last year.

**Dennis:** He was going through a very personal crisis that was real time. I think our listeners are going to find some application for their lives from this message.

**Bob:** And here’s David Nasser.

[Previously Recorded Message]

**David:** Thirteen days ago, if you asked what I’m doing with my life, I would have told you that I live in Birmingham, Alabama; and I’m going to die in Birmingham, Alabama. I
love Birmingham, Alabama. I am guy from Alabama. I know you’re looking at me and you’re going, “You don’t look like a guy from Alabama.” Originally, I’m from Iran. If you don’t know Iranians, we own all the 7-Eleven®’s in Chicago; right? Those are my people—[Laughter]—that’s where I’m from. I moved to Alabama, married a girl from Alabama, live in Alabama—about four years ago, planted a church in the inner city of Birmingham, Alabama. I really feel called to that and travel, but always come home to Alabama.

Thirteen days ago, if you would have told me that today I’m about to tell you what I’m about to tell you, I would have laughed at you and said, “There’s no way.” But about 13 days ago, I got a phone call from a friend. He invited me to go and be a part of their college ministry at Liberty University. I, at first, said: “Man, I’ll pray about it. We always have a “Yes,” at the table; but there’s no way that I think I’m going to leave Birmingham, Alabama. I’m not going to go and be a part of a college / be on staff at a college when I never finished college. I don’t think we’ll be sending the right message if I’m the guy who never finished and then, all of a sudden, you got him as the vice-president of your school!” So I was like, “You all know that; right?” He was like, “As you’re here legally, and you have a green card we’re good.” [Laughter]

And so, you know—I know there are a lot of times when I get invited to things when I’m the token Middle-Eastern guy. I was like, “Is that why I’m getting invited?” He was like, “Probably”; alright? So I get an invite to pray about being a part of a school.

We start praying about it. To be really frank with you, I have learned not to make big decisions alone. I have learned to walk in the counsel of many; right? I’ve learned to walk in submission to the elders of my church. I went to the elders of my church and said, “Hey, there’s a school in Lynchburg, Virginia, that is praying about asking me to maybe come and be onboard at their school.” They jumped up and said, “Answer to prayer! We’ve been saying, ‘God, when will he leave?’”—you know. [Laughter] I can’t fire them because they’re elders; you know. The moments like that—you question your structure of the church and your leadership hardwire.

All kidding aside, they said: “Man, we’re praying with you. This is kind of something that is in your sweet zone.” We began conversations about me leaving the very church that I planted; leaving my brother, Benjamin, who has Down Syndrome, in Birmingham; leaving my father, who just lost his wife, my mother, and is going through depression; leaving my sister, who just went through a divorce a couple of years ago.

In the middle of all of that, we are beginning to think, and pray, and talk about that—about 13 days ago. About four days into the process, while we are kind of thinking, and praying, and beginning to lose a few meals, and listening to people, I am at a restaurant with some guys from my church staff. We’re sitting there, and I think it took me about 15 minutes to decide whether the grouper was less fattening than the salmon. I’m kind of having this discussion with these guys.
I’m telling you that to say that the phone rings—the cell phone—and it is our next-door neighbor. She says, “Hey David, everything’s okay, I think, but your wife has had a seizure,”—she’s never had seizures before—“and 911 has been called. They’re about to get here, and you need to start heading to St. Vincent’s Hospital.” I get up / I get in the car. We start heading towards the hospital—me and my buddies that are on staff. As we’re heading to the hospital, I’m just calling frantically to find out if the ambulance has shown up yet. I’m asking questions like: “Who found my wife?” and “Has she come back to?”

I realized that my 11-year-old daughter has walked into our living room and that my wife was in the full-blown seizure mode—just foam, and hands bent in, and eyes rolled back. My daughter / my little pre-teen daughter is trying to wake Mommy up and is scared because Mommy’s biting her tongue. At the same time, people were coming in because she was calling people to come in from the neighborhood. All of that was happening, in all honesty, while I was deciding whether I should get the grouper or the salmon.

I have a question for you this afternoon: “What do you do when something’s going down the chute? What do you do when something’s happening that is so big? What do you do when the trajectory of your life might very well be changing 180 [degrees] or whatever? What do you do when something’s happening, but you don’t even know to be on bended knee for it? What do you do?”

In that moment, I just began to just ask God. That night, I’m lying beside my wife, in the hospital, and I began to ask God—I said, “God, how do I reckon with that, as a husband?” I was so thinking about the next place, and now I’m wondering if my wife has a brain tumor. Yesterday, a hundred percent of my prayer time was built around a very little, close circle of five things. Little did I know, yesterday, that I should have been praying, ‘God, please don’t give my wife a brain tumor.’ Right now, that is the prayer we’re praying.

So what do you do when you don’t even know, right now?—somebody in this room doesn’t even know that the lump is back / somebody, right now in this room, doesn’t even know that stuff is going on right now that, when you go home, is going to absolutely wreck everything that looks like a pretty average week. What do you do when you don’t even know that you should be praying?

I asked my wife that question. She said something that was pretty revolutionary for me. I just want to bring before you just one little thought this afternoon. She said: “You know, when you didn’t know to pray, guess what I know, looking back? Jesus was praying for me. Jesus knew to pray. Jesus wasn’t thinking about salmon. Maybe He was, but He also knew what was going on with our little girl. He was also in full knowledge of what was happening before me. Jesus knew what doctor was going to be appointed to me. Jesus knew what the results of the test were going to be. Jesus has always been the great Shepherd. Jesus has been asking the Father on your behalf, beyond stuff that you
don’t even know how to ask for. Even when you didn’t know to pray, Jesus was—before you, after you, scattered, covered, smothered—asking God for you.”

Isn’t that assuring to know today?—[Applause]—that Jesus—Jesus has, on your behalf, pressed in. It’s really good; isn’t it? Jesus just models that for us. We see that all over Scripture—all over Scripture. In Luke, in different moments, we see Jesus, very early in the morning while it was still dark, going up and going to a solitary place and modeling for us—this moment after moment—where He was pressing in on behalf of His people.

One of my favorite moments in all of this has been John 17. I have to tell you—in the last two weeks, John 17 has meant something very different for me. When my wife is lying there—by the way, sandwiched between her first seizure and an hour later her second seizure / her second seizure coming when I have had that conversation with her. I fall asleep—I wake up to her just absolutely again in full-throttle seizure mode again, and I needed to hear from her in that moment.

By the way, I kept saying, “How come I wasn’t there?” I felt bad, like, “How come I was picking between two different fish grill things on the…” There was no difference between when I wasn’t there and when I was there because, when I was there, I was just staring at her. You know what I was doing when I was there? I was yelling to the One who was there all along: “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! My wife’s having a seizure, Jesus!”

In the middle of all of this / in the middle of the season that we’ve been going through—by the way, in the last 13 days, we’ve not only sensed that maybe God for sure is nudging us towards that—we’ve had the house on the market for three-and-a-half years. After three-and-a-half years, some redneck with a mullet walked into our house and bought it cash. [Laughter] [Applause] What do you do?—when you’re praying for executives to come over and buy your house; and God was like: “No. A redneck’s coming in.” We didn’t even know to pray for the right thing!

And in the middle of all that, I just wanted to tell you that, in the last few days, this has really meant something different to me. This is one of my favorite places in Scripture, where Jesus is just praying for us. This is that moment when we’re in the garden here—this is John 17:20 and 21. Can we just look at it together for just a minute? It’s such a great moment here / such a good snapshot on the priestly intercession of our Lord.

Listen to this—John 17:20 and 21. Jesus says, “I do not”—let me just stop right here. I just want to make sure we get what’s going on. Let me give you the context for the text; alright?—have to give you the context. So, Jesus is at the garden. Jesus is not surprised that, any minute, a centurion is going to show up; right? Any minute they’re going to drag him to a wrongful trial, any minute they’re going to wrongfully accuse Him, any minute it’s all about to play. Jesus knew—by the way, so did the disciples—all the prophecies of old had said He was going to be pierced for our transgressions, wounded for our sins, the punishment that was upon us was not going to be upon us but upon Him, and that by those wounds we were going to be free; right?—Isaiah 53.
Jesus knew that all of that was coming to that very moment. Jesus knew that any minute now they’re going to let [Him,] who knew no sin / Jesus become sin so that we, the sinners, might become the righteousness of God. Jesus knew that He had come for that very purpose / to that very hour. Jesus knew that: “Any minute, they’re going to come and get Me. They’re going to accuse Me. They’re going to eventually crown Me,”—right—“but not to honor Me, but to mock Me with a crown of thorns. They’re going to begin to beat Me.”

By the way, He wasn’t spared, as God, any of the physical pain of that moment. Jesus knew they were going to take a cross / a piece of wood and they were going to put it on Him. By the way, that was not an antiseptic thing—it wasn’t a clean thing. They used the same piece of wood over, and over, and over again. Jesus knew that there would be the stench of death on that cross. He knew that His body was going to have to bear that weight and begin to carry it. Jesus knew, as he carried it, that the people were going to mock Him; and they were going to laugh at Him. Jesus knew that they were going to take nine-inch nails, and they were going to basically nail Him to that tree.

We have this PG version of the Easter cantata, where Jesus is covered in—Jesus knew He was going to be naked / Jesus knew He was going to be low. We have Him really high up so that we can get good lighting on Him on our Easter cantatas; but Jesus knew He was going to be hung low so people would walk by—so people could spit in His face, so they could mock Him and call Him all kinds of names. Jesus knew that all of that was about to happen.

Can I just ask the macho men in this room: “If you know that in the next nine hours you’re about to beaten, you’re about to be bloodied, you’re about to be mocked, you’re about to have everything come down like the cross—” Jesus knew: “My heart is going to beat so fast that it’s literally going to burst the water cavity that protects the human heart. When they pierce My side, that blood and water’s going to come out.” Jesus knew every bit of that was going to happen. All the prophecies of old had told about it.

If you knew—you look like a man’s man right here; alright? We have some guys over here—I’m not going to point at them—they’re plucking their eyebrows and wearing skinny jeans. [Laughter] You look like a man’s man. So, I am not even looking at those guys / I am not even looking at those guys, who are at the Gap®, going, “Let’s buy these jeans, and we’ll share them.” I’m looking at you—alright?—looking at you, buddy—alright? So you’re a man’s man. If you’re a man’s man, and you look like a man: “What’s on your mind, brother? What is on your mind if you know, in the next nine hours, all the weight of the sin of the world is about to be imputed upon you?!”

I don’t know about you, but I’d be thinking about me. You know what would be on my mind, if I’m in the garden and I know, in just a second, it’s all about to play out—physically and spiritually. You know what’s on my mind, if I know I’m in the crushing garden—right?—I’m in the olive garden—and I know that in just a second I’m going to
be the sweet oil that’s going to be crushed, and the sweet anointing is going to pour out of my body. You know what would be on my mind? “Wow, this is a lot of stuff that’s about to happen to me.”

So, in the middle of that moment, beloved, in the middle of that moment, look what is on Jesus’ mind. You know what would be on my mind?—me and what I have to go through. You know what’s on Jesus’ mind?—me/you. And in that very moment—that’s the context—Jesus begins to pray.

[Studio]

**Bob:** Well, we have to interrupt the story here. We’ve been listening to David Nasser—the first part of a message that he presented at the *I Still Do* marriage celebration that we hosted last year—powerful message. The audience really responded to what he was sharing.

**Dennis:** Yes; and they left there, I think, more aware of Jesus Christ’s claims on their lives, their marriages, their families. If there’s ever been a time in our nation’s history when we needed marriages and families to really be contemplating about Christ’s claims on your life, your marriage, your family, it’s today because there is a real battle for your marriage and family taking place.

As he was talking, I was thinking about Romans, Chapter 8, which talks about how the Holy Spirit also prays for us.

**Bob:** That’s right.

**Dennis:** Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit”—that’s the Holy Spirit—“helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words...” Just based on the authority of Scripture, you have two thirds of the Trinity who is still thinking about you / still praying for you in the crisis you’re facing / the issues that are confronting you—maybe it’s a health issue, maybe it’s a struggle in your marriage, maybe it’s a struggle with a child or perhaps an extended family member. The point is: “Jesus Christ is praying for you, and the Holy Spirit is praying for you in ways you can’t even pray for yourself. He knows how to pray because He knows what’s going on in your life.”

I think the question is: “Will you yield to Him? Will you surrender to Jesus Christ and let Him be your Lord, your Master, your Redeemer?” He died for you. Maybe you don’t know Him—maybe you just dropped in to this radio program, and you’ve heard us talking about this. Maybe you need to know the King of kings and Lord of lords, who came to take away the sins of the world. He came to die for you. Maybe it’s time you surrendered your life to Him.
Bob: The foundation of every strong, healthy, vibrant marriage is a relationship with Jesus Christ. That’s the foundation on which a healthy marriage is built. If you don’t know Christ / if you don’t have a relationship with God through Jesus, go to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the link in the upper left-hand corner of the screen that says, “GO DEEPER.” You’ll find a link there that says, “Two Ways to Live.” It lays out for you the path that is in front of every one of us: “Are we going to walk the path that God points us to / what Jesus called the narrow way?” or “Are we going to walk the wider path that most people are on?—it’s the path of self-determination.” The choice we make about the path we choose has eternal consequences. Again, go to: FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the link in the upper left-hand corner of the screen that says, “GO DEEPER.” Look for the button that says, “Two Ways to Live”; and click on that. You’ll find out more about what it means to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

And then, don’t forget, we have another I Still Do marriage event coming up this fall. David Nasser presented the message we’ve heard today at I Still Do, back last year. This year, in addition to Dennis and Barbara Rainey, you’ll get a chance to hear from Crawford and Karen Loritts, Alex Kendrick, and Alistair Begg—all of them speaking at the I Still Do event, live, from the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, on Saturday, October 17th.

If you live in that area, you’re welcome to join us for the day and be a part of the live audience; but there are going to be simulcast locations, all around the country—hundreds of churches that will be simulcast sites for I Still Do on Saturday, October 17th. If you’d like to consider your church being a host site, go to FamilyLifeToday.com and, again, click that link that says, “GO DEEPER,” in the upper left-hand corner. You’ll see a button there for I Still Do. When you click on that, you’ll see the information about how to be a host site for the I Still Do marriage event or how you can join us, live, at Thomas Road Baptist in Lynchburg, Virginia, on Saturday, October 17th. If you have any questions, you can call us at 1-800-FL-TODAY. Our toll-free number, again, is 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.”

You know, most of us tend to think of marriage as a coupling together of two human beings; but as David Nasser has talked about today, marriage is more than that. God designed marriage to be a joining together of a man and a woman with Jesus at the center of that union—a cord of three strands. One of the things we try to remind our listeners of every day, here on FamilyLife Today, is that your marriage and your family needs to have that kind of a firm foundation for the house to stand. You need your marriage to be built on the Rock.

I just want to take a minute here and say, “Thank you,” to those folks—those of you who are listening—who make it possible for us to provide practical biblical help and hope for marriages and families every day—on this station, through our mobile apps, on our website. Your partnership with us makes FamilyLife Today possible. We couldn’t do it without you, and we’re grateful for your support.
If you’d like to make a donation today, you can do that by going to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. In the upper right-hand corner of the screen, you’ll see a link that says, “I CARE.” When you click on that, you can make an online donation; or you can call 1-800-FL-TODAY—make your donation over the phone. Or you can mail a donation to us. Our mailing address is FamilyLife Today, PO Box 7111, Little Rock, AR; and the zip code is 72223.

And we hope you’ll join us back tomorrow as we’ll hear more from David Nasser about the reality that Jesus is indeed praying for us, for our marriage and for our family. Hope you can tune in for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with 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.

FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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