Bob: Just how much are we in control of our own emotions? Robert Wolgemuth says, “It’s more than we realize.”

Robert: Bobbie, my late wife—she was an inspired person, who had a hair-trigger on her emotions. There was one time we were screaming at each other in the kitchen, and the phone rang. [Phone ringing] Now, if you had said to me, “Are you out of control?” I would have said, “Yes; I am completely out of control.” [Phone ringing] I picked it up [speaking calmly]: “Hello?” [Laughter] I thought I was out of control—I wasn’t. I had chosen to be out of control.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, March 9th. Our host is Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. How can we, as a married couple, outdo one another in showing honor? That’s what the Bible tells us to do. Well, in order to do that, we’ve got to understand how to control our passions. We’ll talk about that today. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Friday edition. You know, one of the things I’ve realized over time is that most of us think there are a handful of verses in the Bible that talk about marriage, specifically; but we don’t typically think about other passages that talk about relationships as being about marriage. If you stop and think—Jesus said all of the law and the prophets is summed up in this: “Love God and love your neighbor.” Well, who’s your closest neighbor?—it’s the person you married; right?

Dennis: That’s right.

Bob: So, everything that the Bible has to say about how we’re to relate to one another / how we’re to live with one another applies, first, in a marriage relationship.

Dennis: Bob, we’re going to spend some time in a passage that I think is being overlooked today. I haven’t heard nearly enough messages from Romans, Chapter 12, especially the first two verses, really, in a couple of decades. I think there is a reason; because this challenges us to our core: “Will we surrender all to Jesus Christ?” Just listen to these verses of Romans 12: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed
by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Then, verse 9, which really is a great marriage verse: “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast”—hold fast—“to what is good.”

**Bob:** Those really are great verses for us to apply in marriage. That’s exactly what our friends, Robert and Nancy Wolgemuth, did a few weeks ago when they joined us on the Love Like You Mean It® marriage cruise. One morning, they opened up Romans 12 and just had a conversation with all of us there, where they talked about this passage, and how it applies in marriage, and shared insights with all of us. That’s what we’re going to hear today—is what that dialogue sounded like.

I just want to mention—again, we’ve been talking about it this week. If you would like to join us onboard the Love Like You Mean It marriage cruise next year, we have more than 70 percent of the cabins reserved for 2019. So, if you’re at all interested, now is the time to get more information or reserve your cabin. We’ll be travelling to Honduras, to Belize, and to Key West next year. We’ve got speakers like Voddie Baucham, Dr. Juli Slattery. Ron Deal is going to join us. Alex and Stephen Kendrick will be back with a rough-cut of their new movie that they are just starting to work on now.

You can get more information about the cruise, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com; or you can sign up to be with us by calling 1-800-FL-TODAY. You better do it quickly because staterooms are starting to go. We’d love to have you be on the cruise with us next year.

**Dennis:** And I ran into a young man from Nebraska, who said: “Dennis, my wife and I came to this six years ago. It so impacted our lives that we went back and invited our two pastors of our church to come with us with their wives.” He said, “They had a time of renewal on the cruise.” This year, he said he was back; and I think he told me they brought six pastors and their spouses this year. You’re talking about somebody who really believes, first of all, in the ministry of the local church and wants to find a way to bless pastors.

Bob, you are a pastor. You wouldn’t turn somebody down if they gave you this cruise; would you?

**Bob:** I’d find a way to carve out some time on my schedule so we could do that; yes.

**Dennis:** I think I would as well. Find a way to bless somebody—come, and bring them, and make an impact in their life.

**Bob:** Alright. Let’s listen as our friends, Robert and Nancy Wolgemuth, dive into Romans, Chapter 12. Nancy, of course, is the speaker on Revive Our Hearts, the daily radio program. She’s a best-selling author. Robert is a best-selling author, as well, and a speaker. It was delightful to join them and be with them as we just dove into God’s Word together.
[Recorded Message]

**Robert:** So, this first verse—you know, honey, I thought of living sacrifice—

**Nancy:** Can I say one thing before you say that?

**Robert:** Go! This is the conversation.

**Nancy:** I love this. And we’re going to let you into our living room. This is how we’ve been sitting, talking about—

**Robert:** Right.

**Nancy:** —this passage—but just before the living sacrifice, the mercies of God—if you remember, this is Chapter 12 of Romans. The first 11 chapters have been laying out for us how holy God is, how sinful we are, how much we deserve His wrath and His judgment, but that He took that wrath and judgment for us, and has extended His mercy and grace to us through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Robert:** Amen.

**Nancy:** So, in light of the gospel / those mercies, this is how we’re supposed to live. As we’ve been meditating on this, we’ve been saying, “Look, if we don’t have the gospel in our marriage—at the center of it / at the center of our own lives—what chance do we have? We cannot live out all this stuff that we’re just getting ready to—

**Robert:** Amen.

**Nancy:** —“see here—if we don’t have our lives really rooted in the gospel of Christ.”

**Robert:** So, if somebody says, “I can’t be a great husband,” the answer to that is “Amen.”

**Nancy:** —or “…wife.”

**Robert:** —or “…wife.”

**Nancy:** Yes.

**Robert:** That’s right. Of course, you can’t.

So, then, living sacrifice—so, you remember the Old Testament and the animal put on the altar? What kind of rights does the sacrifice have?—none. So, when you get married, you relinquish your rights. As a believer, you’ve already done that; but you
relinquish your rights to each other. That’s part of this being one thing—that I have said to Nancy: “I could say this” / “I could do this. I would have the right to do this or to say this; but I relinquish those rights like a living sacrifice.”

**Nancy:** And the starting place for that is in our relationship with the Lord, presenting ourselves—our bodies / everything about us—to Him. Isn’t it a whole lot easier to surrender ourselves to each other once we’ve been surrendered to Christ?

**Robert:** Completely.

**Nancy:** So, my body is His—now, I can give my body to you, as a living sacrifice.

**Robert:** So, we know what that looks like to surrender to Him; and then surrender our rights to each other.

**Nancy:** Every moment of every day is an opportunity to blend our lives together by surrendering, together, to Christ—

**Robert:** Right; yes.

**Nancy:** —and then to one another.

**Robert:** Awesome. So, then, verse 2: “Don’t be conformed to this world.” How hard is that? J.B. Phillips says, “Don’t let the world”—remember what it says?—“squeeze you into its mold.” So, when hot plastic goes through this machine, and it gets sucked into a mold, it doesn’t have a choice. So, by the mercies of God, we have presented ourselves as a sacrifice; and then, He gives us the right to resist being conformed to the world. On our own, it’s a futile effort; but He helps us to not be conformed to the world.

**Nancy:** And how true is that in relation to what we believe about marriage? The world has a mold for marriage.

**Robert:** That’s right—so “Don’t be conformed to the world, but be”—what’s the word?—

**Audience:** Transformed.

**Robert:** —“transformed.” Isn’t that a great word? Be transformed / be different—different is good. Would you say, “Amen,” to that?

**Audience:** Amen.

**Robert:** Different—we’re going to be different, and different is good. It’s not weird or nerdy.

**Nancy:** —if it’s lined up with God’s Word.
Robert: It’s good. Different is good. We’re going to be different here.

So, alright—“...that you may discern the will of God.” I have a question: “What is the will of God for you, and what is the will of God for your marriage? Do you know that the Scripture tells us?” It does; it does—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18—right?—ready? “Rejoice”—how would you like to be married to a rejoicing person?—“Pray and give thanks for this is the will of God.” So, rejoice, pray, give thanks.

You know, you find yourself, when you pray, that you tell the Lord things that you wouldn’t necessarily say to each other, even if you are in each other’s presence. So, from the very beginning, the Lord has given us the joy—to Nancy and me—the joy of praying together.

Nancy: This has been a huge gift in our marriage and in our dating relationship; but first thing in the morning—early this morning—Robert is like o-dark-thirty / he’s out of there. He’s getting his coffee, and his Bible, and heading out. I’m not really awake yet, but just enough—that you’ll lean over, put your face next to mine, and just commit this day to the Lord, praying.

At night, it’s the other way around. [Laughter] He’s just flat out, and I’m ready to go to work; but we pray. You pray, and it’s not long. It’s not theologically complex, but it’s really sweet. For a wife, guys, what this does, in terms of giving security—and I know it’s a risk / it’s vulnerable to do this; but sometimes, it seems like it’s harder with the person you’re closest to—but what a sweet gift that has been in our marriage, honey, for you to—

Robert: Oh, thank you.

Nancy: —just lead us to the throne of the Lord together. It’s also really hard to stay mad at each other when you’re praying together. [Laughter] So, this has helped us on a daily basis.

Robert: You know, if I could lovingly take you by the shoulders—every man in this room—I would say, “Oh, please, give that a try—give that a try.” So, like what would that mean? You said—

Nancy: It’s a huge gift.

Robert: Yes; I’m humbling myself before the Lord. I’m admitting that, without His participation in my day / without His control of this day, I’m toasted. So, pray, give thanks, and rejoice: “Wow, I wonder what God’s will is for me?” That’s it—it’s in the Word.

Are you ready to go on? Verse 3—
Nancy: I love this about not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. This is—

Robert: That never happens in a marriage; does it? [Laughter]

Nancy: —just to go into our day or that discussion with that grid that is not exalting myself but exalting Christ and lifting up my mate—and their perspective, and opinions, and desires as carrying weight—and we’ll come to that more in the passage.

Robert: Humility is really hard to work on; isn’t it? That’s a gift. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to not think of ourselves more highly than we ought in our marriages.

Nancy: Next one, one body / many members—is that where we’re going, honey?

Robert: Yes.

Nancy: The members don’t all have the same function. We’re one body in Christ / individually members of one another. We know how that relates to our relationship with Christ; but in marriage, the fact that we are one—there is a unity there, but there is also diversity—we are different.

I found myself—even as we’re going into this session, we prepare very differently. We present differently. I’m thinking, “How do we do this as one in Christ?” Well, the way we do it is—I celebrate how God has wired Robert. It’s not a matter of “My way is better / his is not as good.” It’s more: “Thank You for the ways You have gifted him,” and “I need those in my life. I need his ability to be more spontaneous and, maybe, he needs something about my being not as spontaneous.”

Robert: Maybe—just maybe. [Laughter]

Nancy: We celebrate those differences; and that’s what enables—that’s humility living out in that marriage.

Robert: So interesting—you know?—the one body concept. You think of Genesis 2: “A man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh.” So, this text is used a lot relating to the church as the bride of Christ; but guess what? You and your mate are also the bride of Christ; okay?

Nancy: Can we—I want to make sure we get to that verse 9.

Robert: Okay. “Let love be genuine.” No room for phonies; amen?

Audience: Amen.
Nancy: But the very next word—

Robert: That’s right.

Nancy: —“Abhor…” Some of your translations say, “Hate…” “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good.” And what we do is—we hate the evil, and the evil one, and his influence in our lives and in our marriage; we love each other so much that we want God, by His grace, to sluff off all the things in us that aren’t like Jesus so that we can cling to / cherish what is good.

First say—Robert’s often saying, “Lor, let us go first. Lord, search me; search my heart; show me what isn’t pure in me.” But one of the beautiful things for me, having not been married all these years, is, now, to have the gift of someone who loves me—tenaciously, and tenderly, and persistently, and beautifully—but part of his love for me is that he, not only hates what is evil in his own life and is quick to repent of that and to seek forgiveness, but he hates what’s evil in my life. That’s part of his love for me—that can help me, and us together, not to be defensive when we can see things.

I have a friend, who always said, “The last guy to know he’s got a rip in his jacket is the guy who has got it on.” So, we need each other. We have blind spots. I never lived with someone before who was pointing out, graciously, helpfully blind spots; because I couldn’t see them. It’s easy to be defensive and think, “Look, at your own jacket, guy;” but to be thankful that the love of this man for me and my love for him makes us want to help each other with those blind spots.

Robert: That’s so good. Think of holding a squirming child. Have you ever done that? [Laughter] You’re holding a squirming child—this text says, “Hold fast to what is good,”—so like a child—the child wants to get out of your arms, where it isn’t safe or good—so you hang on tightly. You hang on tightly to what is good every day.

And look at this: “Love one another with brotherly affection.”

Nancy: You always talk about the most important ingredient in a marriage is?

Robert: In our very first conversation, when we started to, at least, hover over the possibility of a relationship, I said, “I’m so eager for a friendship with you.” That’s what this is talking about—a friendship. So, some folks talk to their dogs more kindly than they do to their mates.

Nancy: —or guests in the home.

Robert: Bobbie, my late wife, was an inspired person, who had a hair-trigger on her emotions. There was one time we were screaming at each other. I don’t mean raising our voices—I mean screaming at each other in the kitchen, and the phone rang. Now, if you had said to me, “Are you out of control?” I would have said, “Yes; I am completely
out of control.” This was back in the day when phones hung on the wall in the kitchen with a long cord. I picked it up, and I said [in a calm voice], “Hello?” [Laughter]

Nancy: We’ve all done it; right?

Robert: You know why?—because it was friend on the end of this line. I thought I was out of control; I wasn’t. I had chosen to be out of control. So, you treat your mate as a friend / as a brother or a sister in Christ.

Nancy: Can we do one more phrase there?

Robert: Do it—showing honor.

Nancy: “Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Robert: Yes; yes.

Nancy: It’s just something we really, really try to do. Robert is amazing at it—let me just say.

Robert: So, like if you’ve ever done a garage sale—[Laughter]—so, it’s the night before, and it’s really late; right? You’ve got those little stickers, and what are you writing on the stickers?—a price; right? You stick it on whatever that thing is. You are voluntarily assigning value to that stuff. Every day, I put a value on this precious person. That’s mine to assign; and if it’s really valuable, then I will treat it like it is really valuable—I will honor it. Does that make sense? That’s a really important thing.

So, each day, saying to myself, “Man, Nancy is—she is the rarest of gifts to me.” So, you honor each other with brotherly affection. I speak to my mate like I would speak to a friend.

Nancy: Just this morning, Robert said to me—he’s shaving—and he goes, “I love you so much.” I mean, I was so grateful. I thanked him and said, “Like what are you thinking? What makes you—like in that moment, why did you just say—was there something in particular?” He says, “I’m just thinking about you and how much I love you.” I thought: “Why should I just think it? I should say it.”

Robert is good at that. I’m not so—I’ve had to learn a lot / I’m learning a lot about verbalizing. He’s the romantic in our marriage. I know some of you women—you say, you know, “My husband’s not that way”—you can be different in this—but we’re learning from each other, and learning to honor, and to bless, and to think ahead: “What would he enjoy?”

Conversely, I’ve seen when I dishonor my husband—one of our first, really hard scenes was—well, I won’t tell the details because times out—but outside a grocery store, where
I had left him in the parking lot for what was supposed to be a few minutes, and it was—he says it was an hour. [Laughter] I’m not sure—

**Robert:** Only because my watch told me that. [Laughter]

**Nancy:** But when I saw and sensed, in those next few minutes, how he felt *dishonored* by the fact that I hadn’t communicated, it was a hard few moments. I just *watched* the life kind of go out of this man’s spirit and realized, “He’s a sensitive man.” Part of me is thinking, “Like why are you so sensitive?” I love it when he’s sensitive and romantic; but not so much when he was sensitive in a hurtful moment.

Well, that was a great learning experience for me—to think: “I can bless this man. I can encourage him. I can strengthen him with my words as he does with me, day after day, and throughout each day.” So, we’re trying to *outdo* one another—

**Robert:** Amen.

**Nancy:** —in showing honor. And what’s the goal?—not just so we can bless each other—we do that—but ultimately, so our marriage can reflect the beauty, and the loveliness, and the worthiness of Christ. That’s what we really want.

**Bob:** That’s a great word from Robert and Nancy Wolgemuth: “Outdo one another in showing honor.” You know, if you try to make that something you live out in your marriage, that’s going to pay dividends for everybody; isn’t it?

**Dennis:** I think it would do every listener well to memorize Romans, Chapter 12, verse 9: “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.” I mean sometimes, we hold fast to what is evil / what is critical / what is bitterness; and we don’t look out for the other person’s best interest, Bob. The Scriptures are alive. They can help you really learn how to love your spouse and care for them in fresh ways.

Some of you are thinking, “Yes; but how about my spouse caring for me like that?” Well, maybe, instead of waiting for him or her to love you, you get busy with fulfilling your assignment from God by loving him or her with the love of Christ.

**Bob:** You know, it’s been fun for us this week to get a chance to kind of relive what we got a chance to go through, a few weeks ago, when we were on the *Love Like You Mean It* marriage cruise. All of the messages we’ve featured this week have been from that event, and this is just a sample of what happens when we get together with hundreds of other couples.

In fact, there were 3,000 of us. We take over the whole ship, and we spend a week together. I have to tell you—I don’t know if you’ve been on a cruise before or not; but...
when you’ve got the whole boat, and when it’s all people who are there with the same heartbeat for marriage, it really is an amazing experience. In fact, that’s one of the reasons why we are already more than 70 percent sold out for next year’s cruise. A lot of people, who were on this year’s cruise, said, “We’re coming again next year.”

And I wanted to make sure that you, as a FamilyLife Today listener, had the opportunity to join us before all the cabins are gone. If you’d like to be with us, now is the time to act; because we expect, in the next 30 days, we will sell out next year’s cruise. There are some special rates available between now and March 19th. If you need more information, go to FamilyLifeToday.com. The best thing to do is to call and get any questions you have answered. You can get registered over the phone. Our toll-free number is 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, this weekend, we’ve got hundreds of couples who are getting away for a weekend getaway—couples in Boise, Idaho; Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; and in Kansas City—actually, Kansas City, Kansas / it’s in Overland Park—couples who are going to be coming out for a Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway. Would you guys pray for those couples as they take time to invest in their marriage relationship this weekend? If you’d like more information about how you can have a weekend getaway with your spouse, go to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com.

I hope you have a great weekend this weekend, and I hope you can join us back on Monday when we’re going to hear from a pastor who reflects on the significant role his father played in shaping the man he is today. Crawford Loritts joins us Monday. I hope you can join us as well.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch. He got some help from our friend, Mark Ramey. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I’m Bob Lepine. Hope you have a great weekend. We will see you Monday for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife® of Little Rock, Arkansas; A Cru® Ministry. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

We are so happy to provide these transcripts to you. However, there is a cost to produce them for our website. If you’ve benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider donating today to help defray the costs?

Copyright © 2018 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

www.FamilyLife.com