Bob: What you believe about God and what you believe about creation is ultimately going to determine what you believe about yourself and about your physical body. Here’s Nancy Pearcey.

Nancy: If the human being is just a product of blind, random forces / if human life is essentially an evolutionary accident, then, eventually that will erode people’s respect for human life. Now, what they will say is: “Well, at some point, it becomes a person. When it becomes a person, then, it has moral standing; then, it has a legal right to protection”; but when is that?—because it’s not rooted in being biologically human. It is a post-Modern concept, and the line is essentially arbitrary/subjective; and every bioethicist draws the line at a different place.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, August 10th. Our host is Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. What we believe or don’t believe about God will ultimately determine what we believe or don’t believe about almost everything else in life. We’ll talk more about that today. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us. I have to tell you—I was talking to our friend, Tonda, who reads all of the books that—

Dennis: She’s grinning, by the way.

Bob: —all of our guests on FamilyLife Today—

Dennis: She’s wondering what you are about to say about her. [Laughter]

Bob: All of our guests—Tonda reads their books, and we talk about them. She puts outlines together and helps us with all of these books. I said, “Tell me about Nancy Pearcey’s new book,” because she read it before I did. She said: “I had to go slow, reading through that book. It was not the kind of thing you read at the beach”; right?

Dennis: Yes.

Bob: It takes some thinking to dive into this book.
Dennis: It does. And Nancy joins us again on FamilyLife Today. Nancy, welcome to the broadcast.

Nancy: Thank you. It’s good to be here.

Dennis: She’s written a book called Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions—that’s what Tonda was struggling with—

Bob: Right.

Dennis: —the hard questions—Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality. She is the professor of Apologetics at Houston Baptist University, best-selling author; and Nancy, we’re really glad you’re here.

Let’s talk about the premise behind this book. You actually say, at the beginning, that the issue of sexuality and the value of human life / abortion are all wrapped up in one of the major battles of our day. Explain what you mean by that.

Nancy: What I mean by that is they all depend on your view of the value of human life. Secular liberalism, which dominates in our world today, has a very low view of what it means to be human. It’s expressed in all of these areas—from abortion, assisted suicide, homosexuality, transgenderism, and many more. If we can get a handle on that underlying worldview, then, we will be much more effective in dealing with these issues.

Francis Schaeffer used to say, “One of our problems is we deal with things in bits and pieces.” I always love that phrase; because what he is saying is: “We’re not going to be effective if we deal with each one of these issues separately. We need to recognize there’s a common, underlying secular worldview.” Once we grasp that, we will find that we have much more social impact, and we can train our children to recognize these issues. We won’t always be on the defensive.

Bob: You’re saying we need to develop a new view of our bodies. Rather than seeing them as just—I heard a guy, one time, refer to this as “our earth suit”—this is how we get around on planet earth. We’ve got this body that is the carrier for our soul.

You would say: “It’s more than just an earth suit. We need to understand God has given us something good with this human body.”

Nancy: Yes; you see, I think we have lost our own heritage to some degree. When I talk to secular audiences, especially, they will sometimes say: “Wait a minute! The low view of the body in Western culture does not come from secularism; it comes from Christianity in so far as...”—that is, sometimes, true; I have—one of my grad students said to me, “I was raised always thinking spirit—good / body—bad.” That was her way of summarizing her understanding of her Christian upbringing.
We have, sometimes, lost our own heritage; because, when the early church was born, it was born into a culture that also had a low view of the material world and the body, although for different reasons from the current secular worldview. The church faced the same challenge that we’re facing today. The church was born into a culture dominated by philosophies like Platonism and Gnosticism—you used that word earlier—

**Bob:** Yes.

**Nancy:** —which treated the material world as the place of death, decay, and destruction. Gnosticism even talked about the body as the prison-house of the soul, and the goal of salvation was to escape the body / to leave it behind. In fact, Gnosticism even taught there were several levels of spiritual beings; and that it was a low-level deity—it was an evil god—who had created this world; because, after all, no self-respecting god would get his hands dirty, mucking about with matter. [Laughter]

In this context, historically, Christianity was nothing short of revolutionary; because what it said was: “No; it was not some low-level god. It was the supreme God / the supreme Deity who had created this world. Therefore, it is intrinsically good,”—as Genesis keeps saying again and again: “And God saw that it was good.” Then, the greater scandal, even, historically speaking, was the incarnation.

**Bob:** Yes; He didn’t just create the bodies—He inhabited a body—He came in human flesh and gave great dignity to His creation by doing so.

**Nancy:** Exactly! It was—like I say, it was a scandal, historically, to say that God, Himself, had actually taken on a physical body. The incarnation is the ultimate affirmation of the human body. Then, when Jesus was executed on a Roman cross, we might say, “He did escape the prison of His body,”—as Gnosticism taught we should aspire to do—then, what did He do? He came back—

**Bob:** Right.

**Nancy:** —in a bodily resurrection.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Nancy:** To the Greeks, this was not spiritual progress; it was regress. Who would want to come back to the body? This was utter foolishness to the Greeks, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians.

Then, at the end of time, God is not going to scrap the material world as if He had made a mistake the first-time around. He’s going to restore it and renew it—create a new heaven and a new earth—and you and I will live on that new earth in restored bodies. From the beginning, the Apostles’ Creed affirms the resurrection of the body. This is an astonishingly high view of the physical world. There is nothing like it in any other religion.
or philosophy. This is what we need to help our young people understand—is that we have a very high view of the physical world.

**Dennis:** I want to go to the issue of abortion, for a moment, and just talk about how a person, who doesn’t have a Christian worldview, views abortion. How do they think about it?

**Nancy:** Well, I have a quote from a feminist journalist that starts off my chapter on abortion—she says, “I was always firmly pro-choice until I became pregnant with my own daughter.” She said, “I had no doubt that my daughter was human from conception / from Day 1.” She said, “I went through several months of struggling.” Then, she said, “I decided I’m going back to being firmly pro-choice.”

What was her reasoning? She said, “It’s true that the fetus is human and is life from conception, but women will lose too much if we lose the right to control our reproduction.” So, she concludes, saying, “Yes; it’s killing, but it’s a lesser evil.” And the final sentence is very chilling—her final sentence is: “To protect women’s rights, we must be prepared to kill.”

**Bob:** Wow!

**Nancy:** That’s where the debate is these days. A lot of people are still arguing on abortion by saying, “Oh, but the fetus is human,” as if, once you recognize it’s human, you will realize abortion is wrong. That’s not where the debate is anymore.

**Dennis:** Yes; that’s what you said in the book. I was surprised by that. You said, “That’s not where the action is today.”

**Nancy:** Right; among the professional bioethicist, there is just no doubt. It’s pretty much unanimous that human life begins at conception; but now, what you see in that example is that it has filtered down to journalists and other thought leaders, who are now saying, “Yes, we’ll acknowledge the fetus is human; and still, we are going to argue that it’s okay to kill.”

It’s back to your view of origins. If the human being is just a product of blind, random forces, then, eventually, that will erode people’s respect for human life. Now, what they will say is: “Well, at some point, it becomes a person. When it becomes a person, then, it has moral standing. Then, it has a legal right to protection”; but when is that?—because it’s not rooted in anything biological. It becomes a purely post-Modern concept, and no one can decide where to draw the line.

If you read bioethicists, many of them are now starting to argue that the fetus does not become a person until after birth. The famous scientists, who discovered the double-helix structure of DNA, Crick and Watson—
Bob: Right.

Nancy: —they have both argued that we should allow three days of genetic testing before deciding that the newborn is a person with a right to life. The rationale being that some genetic defects don’t show up until after birth, so parents should have a right to wait until after birth to decide whether their baby is up to snuff and they want to keep him.

The ethicist, Peter Singer, who is at Princeton, has actually said, “Personhood remains a grey area, even at three years of age.” Because it’s not rooted in being biologically human—it is a post-Modern concept—and the line is essentially arbitrary/subjective—and every bioethicist draws a line at a different place.

Bob: The thing that is striking for me is that we can look back at the sin of racism; and we can see that, in racism, there was a depersonalization of human beings. Think back to our own Constitution that said, “The voting of certain people is three-fifths of others.” We were depersonalizing them in the process.

Where we are with abortion, we’re applying the same logic that we’ve looked at with racism and said, “This is inherently wrong,” but now, we say, “With babies, it makes sense.”

Nancy: In fact, since we quoted Peter Singer a moment ago—he’s at Princeton—he says—now, remember he is a convinced evolutionist; he argues for Darwinism. His conclusion is: “If we are products of evolution, then we are no more special than any other life form. If you think humans are special in any way, you are guilty of the sin of speciesism, which is akin to racism.”

You know, if racism means your race is superior, or sexism—

Bob: Right.

Nancy: —you think your sex is superior—speciesism means you think your species is superior. For a non-Christian, like Peter Singer, it’s not only that humans don’t have any special value; but if you think they do, you’re guilty of the sin of speciesism.

Dennis: This is so eye-opening on so many fronts. You not only apply this, at the beginning of life, but you also apply this value system to the end of life. Explain how this is showing up through euthanasia in various countries around the world.

Nancy: Well, think of the most well-known euthanasia case in recent history. Most people still remember Terri Schiavo. She was a young woman, who had brain damage. Her family was happy to care for her, but her husband wanted her food and water discontinued, which, of course, would cause her death. The interesting thing is the
media presented it as a right to die issue; but Terri was not dying. She was not terminally ill, so that was not what was at stake.

It was a TV program, where a bioethicist from the University of Florida was asked, “Do you think Terri is a person?” He said: “No; I do not. I think self-awareness is an essential criterion for personhood.” That was really the heart of the debate. If a person is no longer cognitively—has a certain arbitrary level of cognitive functioning—then, they no longer qualify as a person. Their treatment can be discontinued; their food and water can be ended; their organs can be harvested; and so on.

Euthanasia is promoted in the name of compassion, but this is not compassionate. This is exclusive. What it is saying is: “Some people don’t make the cut!”

Bob: Yes.

Nancy: “They don’t qualify for human rights.”

The pro-life view, by contrast, is inclusive—it says: “If you are a member of the human race, you’re in—you count. Every human is a person and has the full rights of personhood and legal protection.” Their view is exclusive; our view is actually the one that’s inclusive.

Bob: Wasn’t it the governor of Colorado / the former governor of Colorado, who said: “Older people have a responsibility to die,”—that we have a responsibility to give up our personhood and our lives so that younger, more viable, more human people can exist?

Nancy: Yes; in fact, in Holland, now, there are euthanasia vans. There are mobile vans that, if your doctor has moral objections to giving you an injection to end your life, then, you can call this van; and they will come around and offer you this service.

Dennis: It’s becoming quite an interesting culture, because Canada recently passed a law. They are now outlawing euthanasia tourists, where you can’t travel to Canada and be a tourist—

Bob: —to die there?

Dennis: —to die there. They are not willing to recognize your right.

All of this goes back to a meeting at Harvard—I’d never heard this before—in 1968, of 13 doctors, who got together and who really determined who was a person and who wasn’t; and who had the right to die at that point.

Nancy: Yes; that’s when the term, “personhood,” was actually formed. Ironically, from the beginning—again, it has nothing to do with biology—it was purely a philosophical concept, from the beginning.
We tend to think that, surely, people decide death by something physical—by: you stop breathing; your heart stops; your brain waves stop—but apparently, according to a science journalist, whose name is Dick Tracy, who wrote a whole book on this—he said, “The actual guidelines for determining death are not widely known and not very clear.” What it ends up, in practice, being—you are no longer a person when the attending physician decides you are no longer a person.

Bob: Wow. Nancy, when you were a teenager or into your early 20s, you didn’t think like this; did you? You grew up in a culture, where you thought very differently about issues of life. You were a pro-choice feminist, early on, in life; right?

Dennis: You were a hippie; is that right?—or you felt comfortable with the hippies? [Laughter] I’m just trying to picture it, Nancy. [Laughter]

Bob: I want to see some photographic evidence.

Dennis: Yes; I do too.

Bob: That’s exactly what I was thinking—some old, tie-dyed pictures. Have you got some of those?

Nancy: Well, go on Facebook. [Laughter] I was raised in a Lutheran home—Scandinavian Lutheran, so we’re very ethnic Lutheran. I started asking questions when I was in high school. I started—I mean, I was attending a public high school. All my teachers were secular; all my textbooks were secular. In fact, all my friends were secular. I just started asking, “How do we know that this is true?—that Christianity is true?”

Unfortunately, apologetics was not very widely known back then; so I couldn’t get any good answers. I asked a Christian college professor, “Why are you a Christian?” He said, “Works for me!” I thought, “That’s it?!” Then, I had a chance to talk to a Christian seminary dean; and I thought I would get something of greater substance from him. All he said was: “Don’t worry. We all have doubts sometimes.”

I eventually decided that Christianity had no answers; and that if you don’t have good reasons for something, you shouldn’t say you believe it—whether it’s Christianity or anything else—so I, very intentionally, set aside my Christian upbringing about halfway through high school and started on a search for truth. This is how I got into philosophy to start with—it was not some academic interest. I literally started walking down the hallway, at the public high school I attended, and pulling books off the philosophy shelf; because I thought: “Where else do people talk about these things? What is truth? How do we know it?” and “What’s the meaning of life?”
It was a variety of these questions—going one by one, working them through, and seeing that Christianity actually did have a better answer for all of these questions.

**Bob:** There had to be a point, though, when somebody said, “Are you a Christian?” and you said, “I guess I am!”

**Nancy:** Well, I had a moment; yes—but at that point, it was just: “Are the accumulated arguments and evidence enough—

**Bob:** Yes.

**Nancy:** —“that I could say, ‘I’m convinced’?” because, you know, you could search the rest of your life.

**Bob:** Right.

**Nancy:** Obviously, it’s going to be a never-ending quest. You have to come to a moment of honesty, where you say, “But have I studied enough that I am convinced?” That was the moment when I said, “Yes; I realize I am convinced!”

**Bob:** Nancy needs to hear your quote at this point.

**Dennis:** I was just thinking that, Bob. When I was a college junior at the University of Arkansas, my pastor brought an African American speaker by the name of Tom Skinner to speak at the University of Arkansas. This was unheard of / this was radical—and this was in the midst of the hippies, by the way. He started and ended each of five messages with this quote, and it hit me right between the spiritual eyes; okay?

Here it is: “I spent a long time trying to come to grips with my doubts. When suddenly I realized I better come to grips with what I believe. I have since moved from the agony of questions that I cannot answer to the reality of answers that I cannot escape, and it’s a great relief.” [Laughter]

**Nancy:** I like that.

**Dennis:** Well, Nancy, I’m glad God chased you down and has taken your very bright mind—

**Bob:** Yes.

**Dennis:** —and clear pen to be able to write these great thoughts in a book like *Love Thy Body*. You’re needed in the body of Christ today for being a fresh voice of apologetics for the truth of Scripture. I’m glad you made the trip from Houston all the way to Little Rock. Thanks for joining us, and hope you’ll come back and visit us sometime.
Nancy: Thanks so much for having me.

Bob: Well, of course, we hope our listeners will get a copy of your book, which is called *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. This is a great book for high school / college students to go through. It’s a great book for moms and dads to go through because, as you’ve said, what you believe about God / what we believe about creation—what our worldview is—is going to determine where we land on issues, like homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, transgenderism, the hookup culture. All of that flows out of our view of God.

We’ve got copies of Nancy’s book in our *FamilyLife Today* Resource Center. It’s a book you can order, online. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com to order, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY to place your order. Again, the website is FamilyLifeToday.com; but if you’re driving / if it’s easier to just call, call 1-800-358-6329—1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY”—I assume it is hands-free calling. I don’t want you to break the law to call and order a copy of Nancy's book; okay?

Speaking of hands-free calling and listening, *FamilyLife Today* is now able to be heard on the Amazon-based smart speakers. If you would like to listen to *FamilyLife Today* on that device, you need to go into your app that starts with that person’s name; and you need to set it up. Just type in “FAMILYLIFE” as one word; and it will enable *FamilyLife Today* to be heard regularly. All you have to then is say the device’s name and say, “Play FamilyLife Today,” and you'll be able to hear our program on your smart speaker.

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If you’ve thought about supporting *FamilyLife Today* in some way, and you’ve never done so, this would be a great opportunity; because this month, we have a half-million dollar matching-gift opportunity that we’re trying to take full advantage of. Every donation we receive in the month of August is being matched, dollar for dollar, up to a total of $500,000. So, if you make a $50 donation today, that becomes a $100 benefit to us; and we’re asking *FamilyLife Today* listeners to help us take full advantage of this matching-gift opportunity.

You can donate, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com; or you can call 1-800-FL-TODAY to donate. When you make a donation, we’re going to send you, as a thank-you gift, a brand-new copy of Dennis and Barbara Rainey’s brand-new book, which is titled *The Art of Parenting*. As soon as the book arrives from the publisher, you will be on the list to get your copy sent immediately to you. You can keep it for yourself; or if you want to pass it on to your kids or someone you know in your church, obviously, you can do that as well. Again, it’s our “Thank you,” for your support of this ministry when you make a
donation today, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com; or call 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY,” to donate.

And we hope you have a great weekend. Hope you and your family are able to worship together in your local church this weekend.

And I hope you can join us back on Monday when we’re going to talk about what happens in a marriage relationship when a husband is addicted to pornography / when that blossoms into adultery. Can that marriage be saved? What does that husband need to do? How can he deal with the sexual sin in his life? Jonathan Doherty is going to be with us to talk about his own experience with this. I hope you can tune in as well.

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 Monday for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

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