Bob: If you are a new mom, there’s one thing we can be pretty certain of—you’re exhausted. Here’s Stephanie Green.

Stephanie: The baby that you bring home is very demanding, so there is some need for physical rest; but I think there’s another rest that oftentimes isn’t talked about, and that’s the spiritual rest. We need to take time in the Word with the Lord, and that has to be a priority. Oftentimes, it’s not the physical rest that we really need. We may think it’s what we need, but it’s the spiritual rest that we need.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, January 3rd. Our hosts are Dave and Ann Wilson; I’m Bob Lepine. You can always find us online at FamilyLifeToday.com. How do you get spiritual rest as a new mom? How do you work that into the rhythm of parenting? We’re going to talk with Rob and Stephanie Green about that today. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us. I just need to clarify a little grandparent etiquette here—I think we have this right—when your daughter gives birth to her first baby, you, as the mother of the daughter, you have first dibs on either being there when the baby’s born or showing up immediately afterwards. Is that the way the etiquette works?—right?

Ann: I have no daughters, but I’m assuming that would be true; because—

Dave: Sounds good to me!

Ann: —as a mother-in-law, I always give—

Bob: —you defer; you pull back; right?

Ann: Yes, exactly.

Bob: If it’s your son, who’s having a baby, then you give some space. When you had your boys, did your mom come?

Ann: She did.
Dave: Yes, she did; it was awesome!

Ann: It was awesome.

Dave: Thank God for Toot Baron.

Ann: Yes.

Dave: That’s her name, Toot.

Bob: Awesome because why?

Ann: It was awesome because, first of all, my mom asked me, “What do you need?” which was a great question, because I said: “I just want to be with the baby. Can you cook? Can you clean? Can you do laundry?” That was a great question.

Then Dave’s mom came later.

Bob: Yes. You said it was awesome to have both your mom and her mom show up; right?

Dave: Oh, it was awesome. As a young, new dad I had no idea, you know, what to do. To have an older, wiser woman there to sort of coach me and serve, it was a blessing.

Bob: We have Rob and Stephanie Green joining us this week to talk about getting ready for bringing home a baby, and then adapting to parenting/the parenting season of marriage. They’ve written a book called *Tying Their Shoes* that’s about this subject.

Guys, welcome back to *FamilyLife Today*.

Stephanie: Thank you.

Rob: Thank you for having us!

Bob: Rob’s on the staff at Faith Church of Lafayette, Indiana; and Stephanie’s a stay-at-home mom. Did your mom come when you had your babies?

Stephanie: She did. Yes, she came for the first week; and oh, what a blessing!

Bob: Yes; so if you’re coaching a mom, who’s coming to be with her daughter after the baby’s born, what tips would you—what Ann said about just coming and saying, “What do you need?” rather than coming and saying, “Here’s what I want,”—that’s probably the biggest tip; don’t you think?
**Stephanie:** Yes, absolutely. I think, with my mom, she came—for the first one—she came and fed us, cleaned the house—

**Ann:** And that’s huge!

**Stephanie:** Oh, it’s huge. Then with the other ones, she took care of the other children/the older children, so I could just concentrate on bonding with the new baby; and it was great.

**Bob:** Because both physically and emotionally, that’s where you need to be in the first week; right?

**Stephanie:** It is.

**Bob:** You just need to be able to rest and recover and have your baby right there—

**Stephanie:** Yes; absolutely.

**Bob:** —and not worry about anything else.

**Stephanie:** That’s right.

**Bob:** Now, I will have to tell you that probably the first six months of bringing a baby home, maybe even longer than that, I was kind of clueless as to what my job was, other than something functional, on occasion, like, “I don’t want to change another diaper; it’s your turn to change a diaper.” I felt a little detached from the process.

Rob, am I a typical guy, do you think, with that?—or was it unusual that I just felt kind of like, “This is something that’s happening over here, between the mother and the baby, and I’m kind of out in left field”?

**Rob:** Well, my guess is that your wife nursed your babies.

**Bob:** She did.

**Rob:** That tends to put the onus onto the mom—

**Bob:** Right.

**Rob:** —therefore, Dad does feel a bit more disconnected. Sometimes, that’s not the case, because the feeding is done through a bottle; so Dad is taking his fair share of turns.

**Bob:** Right.
**Rob:** But when a mom nurses, there’s no doubt that there can be a real sense of: “I’m really not needed here. It looks like your baby has everything under control/you have everything under control.” That can be a bit isolating.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Ann:** One of the things I’ve noticed in this generation coming up—I’m seeing the dads way more involved than in our generation.

**Dave:** Oh, you know what that means? That means she’s saying I wasn’t involved. [Laughter] That’s what that was! Honey, I’d liked how you did that. [Laughter]

**Ann:** No! I feel like I’m asking you guys; because I’m watching our sons, who have babies—man, they are in it!

**Dave:** They are.

**Ann:** They’re Googling everything: “What’s the schedule?” I’m thinking: “What? You’re the dad, and you’re asking the schedule?”

Are dads more involved now?

**Rob:** Yes. I don’t know that I’d say it’s carte blanche cultural thing, but I do think there are more younger men who are taking a little bit more responsibility than they did. That may also have a companion to there are more moms, who are working outside the home. Those two things might actually have a connection together.

**Bob:** The thing for me is emotionally connecting with a newborn—I’m still not sure exactly what that means. That comes naturally to a mom. I mean, Stephanie, I’m looking at you—bonding with your baby just was like falling off of a log.

**Stephanie:** Well, I think bonding for the mom happens way before the baby’s born. You know, as soon as that positive pregnancy test is read—

**Bob:** —you’re bonding.

**Stephanie:** —you’re bonding.

**Ann:** You guys, let’s say Dave and I are a young couple. We haven’t had any kids yet, but we’re soon expecting. We sit down with you to dinner and we say, “Alright, tell us the top three things: ‘This is what you need to know before this baby is born.’” What are those things that you would say?

**Rob:** The first thing, for me, is remembering that Christ’s work is continual. It’s remembering that what He provides is grace and strength for every moment you’re
going to experience. You don’t know what is going to happen with your child; you don’t
know whether your child is going to be healthy or whether your child is going to be ill.

We have friends—we’ve been communicating, even in the last 24 hours—who just
learned that their newborn is seriously ill. You can’t know that; you don’t always have a
healthy, smooth pregnancy and delivery, and then a healthy child at the end. You don’t
always have that.

You have a blessing from the Lord, regardless of what He gives; so you are dependent
on Him in the midst of those.

**Bob:** You had a distressed moment with your third pregnancy/with that child?

**Stephanie:** We did, yes.

**Bob:** Was it in delivery that the doctors said, “The cord is wrapped around…”

**Stephanie:** Yes.

**Bob:** So, do you remember what you’re thinking, or doing, or feeling in that moment?

**Stephanie:** You know, for me, I worked in OB for 11 years; in fact, I was working at the
hospital during that time, so I was pretty calm, by God’s grace, just because I’ve had so
many babies that—

**Bob:** “This has happened before; they know what to do.”

**Stephanie:** Yes. Then, after awhile, when I couldn’t get her to start breathing, I was like:
“Oh, okay. Well, maybe this isn’t so good,” and we had to hand her off so that she could
get some attention and care. But yes, that can be very stressful.

**Bob:** Do you remember the stress of that, Rob, and just needing to—

**Rob:** Not initially, because things are happening quickly in that moment; I mean,
delivery is happening. It was then, when the doctor responded, that I really understood
that something was going on; but it wasn’t clear what. Then I would say the next five
minutes were a bit stressful; but then after that, it seemed like everything was okay; so
we were able to move forward.

**Bob:** I’m not suggesting that, in those moments, you should not panic, or feel fear, or
that somehow you should be detached from all of that; but it’s different to experience
fear and panic in those moments when you are anchored in Christ/when your life is
rooted in Him than it is if you’re in those moments on your own.
That’s to your point—with whatever you’re going to face in parenting, and you don’t know what it is—the foundation of your life being, “I belong to Christ; He is sovereign over the circumstances/He’s in control of these things…”

**Ann:** I would add, along with that, is—with our babies, every one of them, after birth, they were in the NICU. I remember, every single time that happened, I felt God was asking me, “Can you surrender this child to Me?” That’s a hard thing to do; because you automatically, especially as a mom, you love them.

As you’re saying the same thing, Rob, it’s a surrender-moment to Jesus of: “Jesus, this child is Yours. No matter what, I’m surrendering to You,”—that’s number one.

What’s another one that you would say to parents, “This is really important”? **Rob:** Number two is: “You have to keep your relationship between each other strong.” One of the reasons for that is you’re going to have moments that are really easy and are full of blessing and joy, and you want to celebrate that together. Then, at the same time, you’re also going to have moments of concern or even sorrow. You have to, in the midst of that, not only have your relationship with Christ strong, you have to have your relationship with each other—having a strong commitment—that: “We’re going to go through this together.”

One of my favorite marriage passages is actually Mark, Chapter 12, when the Sadducees come to Jesus and they say: “Hey, we don’t believe in the resurrection, and here’s a story why we don’t. Here’s a woman who marries seven brothers, and all of them die. Whose will she be in the resurrection?”

It’s kind of a: “Of course, Lord, this is ridiculous.” I mean, can you imagine that?—that would the most awkward moment ever in heaven, as she’s walking around and all seven of them are like, “Hey, you’re supposed to be hanging out with me,”—right?

**Bob:** “Hey, my wife’s here!” [Laughter]

**Rob:** Jesus’s answer is, “Marriage isn’t for heaven; marriage is for now.” One of the joys of that is we experience blessing together. When we celebrate, we celebrate together; and when we grieve, we grieve together. We go through the joys and the sorrows, and we do it together. That’s the advice that we would give.

**Ann:** Stephanie, do you have a third?

**Stephanie:** My third would be: “Live each day with the goal of glorifying the Lord: glorifying the Lord in your walk with Him, glorifying the Lord as a wife or a husband, and then strive to glorify the Lord as a parent.”
Be in the Word. I love Psalm 23, too. I love the reminder that God is our Shepherd: He looks after us; He cares for us; He leads us. That is just powerful encouragement when you’re thinking through, not only being pregnant, going through labor and delivery, but then bringing a baby home and living life with a child. God’s our Shepherd.

**Bob:** Stephanie, how have you handled the “me time” need as a mom?

**Stephanie:** [Laughter] Well, it’s true that I think we’ve all been there before; that yes, we just need some time for ourselves. I think, as a new parent, there is some need for rest/physical rest; the baby that you bring home is very demanding. But I think there’s another rest that oftentimes isn’t talked about, and that’s the spiritual rest. We need to get time in the Word with the Lord, and that has to be a priority. Sometimes, it’s not the physical rest that we really need. We may think it’s what we need, but it’s the spiritual rest that we need.

**Ann:** I think it’s good for a mom to determine: “What does she need?”; and one, spiritually; absolutely.

I know that, when Dave came home, I would be like: “Take this child. I need to get out of the house.” He would give me an hour; and sometimes, I’d go work out, which was amazing—I felt like a new person after that. I remember one time going to the drug store and pushing my cart around, thinking, “This is the most amazing thing I’ve done in months!” [Laughter]

**Stephanie:** —up and down every aisle.

**Ann:** Yes!

**Stephanie:** Yes.

**Ann:** Like, “Oh, look at that!” I was like: “This is what my life has become. I’m totally delighted with CVS and being alone.” [Laughter] But just that hour filled me back up.

**Dave:** She even told me—and we put this in our rhythm—“Once a month, could you take the boys for the day?” I figured out a way with work to do that; and as they grew up, it became one of these rhythms they looked forward to. They still remember it, because it was always the same: we went to A&W, got root beer floats, went to the arcade and played games. It was five, or six, or seven hours of extended time for her. I came back; I had a new woman/I had a new wife!

**Ann:** There’s something, too, about being in your house alone. As a mom, you’re always surrounded by kids, so it was great just to have that time.

**Stephanie:** What did you do?
**Ann:** Sometimes I cleaned; sometimes I had an extended Bible time. Before you have kids, you have this extended time with God or friends; so I just took advantage—I put it all in there in one day.

**Dave:** Here’s a chapter you talk about in your book that I think a lot of parents want help with—is: “What is the goal?” You call it “Accomplish the Goal of Parenting.” What is the goal? What are we trying to do, as a parent?

**Rob:** You know, Ephesians 6:4 tells us, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” It grounds you, and it helps you remind yourself that you are in a war for the heart of your child every single day. Sometimes, you feel like you win a battle; and other times, you feel like you completely lost.

**Dave:** Now, as your children were growing up—you know, toddler ages, and ten, eleven, twelve, into the teen years—did you have a way to do that? Did you have a family time, where you said, “We’re going to teach the Word”? Was it as you lived life? How’d you do it?

**Stephanie:** We did a lot of teaching throughout the day. I love the passage in Deuteronomy 6 that says we’re to teach all the time—in the morning, in the afternoon, at night time. Conversing about God any moment we could; we did a lot of that in our house—and still do.

**Rob:** I think we also tried to take advantage of the opportunities that our church had, so it wasn’t just us; it was also getting them around others, who were teaching them the exact same thing. We were, not only doing stuff at home, but we were also putting our children in positions where they were hearing God’s Word and serving in our local body.

**Bob:** So, if you had a do-over—because you’ve launched one; you have one, who’s in college now—if you could go back 20 years and tell your 20-year-old selves what you know now that you wish you’d known then, how might you do the parenting journey a little differently? You’re still in the midst of it, so you’re still making course corrections as you go along, but is there anything you’d say, “Yes, if I had a do-over, this would probably be the area where I would make an adjustment”?

**Rob:** I think the pieces of advice that we just gave were things that we did not have when our first child was born. They were things that we had to learn, and it really would have been helpful had someone talked to us about these things; or maybe somebody did, and we didn’t have ears to hear.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Rob:** But it would have been great for us to have had ears to hear these things, in advance, of where we are today.
Dave: That’s why you wrote the book!

Rob and Stephanie: That’s why we wrote it.

Dave: Yes, exactly. You’ve given people what you didn’t have.

Bob: Well, and the opportunity, as a couple, to sit down—either before the baby comes or in the early years of parenting, and just to develop—I mean, here’s what I remember. I remember us doing it kind of on the fly, without a whole lot of intentionality—in the moment, day to day—not asking the bigger questions: “What’s this all about? What’s the purpose of this?” To have some of those conversations, and align, and prioritize, and say, “This is the big picture,” that can shift the whole conversation/shift the whole direction of your family.

Ann: Yes. I think one of the things I started to implement, after our kids were born, was that the moment I woke up I just said this simple prayer before I got out of bed, or somebody’s crying, or some need: “Jesus, I need You today. I surrender my life and I surrender our kids to You today. Give me wisdom.”

I love the Book of James, that He promises to give us wisdom. I think just that kind of putting my kids and my life on the altar, that’s a great first; and it’s an easy step that just takes a few minutes.

I will say—these years for me were hard. When our kids were little, there was a book called The Desert Years—How to Parent—I forget the subtitle—but The Desert Years. I said, “That is exactly what I’m going through.”

Bob: That’s what it felt like.

Ann: Yes, because it’s dry spiritually; I’m having an identity crisis. It’s so helpful to have other people around us. We were raising our kids with other friends; and I thought, “What would we do without our friends that are saying: ‘Keep going. I’m praying for you’?” The body of believers is so huge in a great church.

That’s one of the things I love about the Art of Parenting™, because I feel like it really gives parents tools; it equips them. You can gather them together, and the movie that goes along with that: “Come on; we need to announce—this is exciting!”

Bob: Yes.

Dave: Like Arrows, produced by this guy right over here, Bob Lepine—and it is now on Netflix! Pretty cool.
Bob: This is a movie that we put together to help launch the *Art of Parenting* video series. It’s the story of a family going from unmarried and pregnant to their 50th anniversary, and going through the parenting journey, and the highs and the lows that come along with that. At the heart of this movie—you guys haven’t seen it; right?

Rob: No.

Bob: Okay, so you need to either rent it or get it on Netflix, because it’s on Netflix.

Ann: We just pulled it up on Netflix today, Bob.

Bob: Did you?

Ann: Yes!

Dave: It’s there, baby!

Bob: The turning point in this movie is when the mom and dad look at each other and begin to recognize Jesus has been an add-on, not the center. When the family gets reprioritized with Jesus at the center, things start to shift in the whole family dynamic. We use that as a tool to get folks interested in, then, going through the eight sessions of *the Art of Parenting*, that feature Dave and Ann Wilson as some of the contributors.

Dave: Oh, we’re a very small part in that.

Bob: No, but an important part of it.

Dave: I would add this, even as we conclude this broadcast. It’s so interesting now—I mean, Bob and Mary Ann are empty nesters; we’re empty nesters—we’re a little bit ahead of you guys. I remember, when I was at your age, with younger kids—all the stages—I remember many times feeling like: “I can’t wait to get through this stage. I can’t wait till they’re out of diapers.” Then, “I can’t wait till…” I remember missing moments because I wanted the next—I wanted to be comfortable later.

Now, there’s nobody in the home; and you sit on the couch. The title of your book made me think of this: “I wish I could tie their shoes right now”; they’re gone. Grandkids are coming; but they’re not there, and the house is empty. I would say to young parents, listening right now: “You’re right in the middle of the mess. Seize the day; enjoy the moment. It’s going to be gone.” Isn’t that right, Bob?

Bob: That’s right.

Dave: It’s going to be gone, and you’re going to blink. We heard that when they were little, and we were younger, and didn’t realize [Snap of fingers] it’s that fast.
Bob: Yes.

Dave: So be fully present, enjoy the moment, ask Christ for all the power you need in that moment; because you need it. Seize it, because it’s going to be gone before you know it.

Bob: That’s one of the lines in FamilyLife®’s movie, Like Arrows: “The days are long, but the years are short.” We have to keep that perspective as parents.

I want to encourage listeners to get a copy of Rob and Stephanie Green’s book, Tying Their Shoes. This is for parents, who are expecting their first child; so it’s to get you ready for the parenting journey. Then get a copy of FamilyLife’s Art of Parenting video series, and go through that with other moms and dads, wherever you are in your parenting journey. That includes a copy of our movie, Like Arrows, along with the eight video sessions that make up the Art of Parenting.

Find out more about the resources we have available when you go online at FamilyLifeToday.com, or call us at 1-800-358-6329—that’s 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.”

Now, we have some pretty exciting news for you as we begin a new year. We want to see more and more people/more and more families spending time in God’s Word. Some of you made resolutions about that already. We talked to our friends at Logos Bible Software. They have agreed: “We’re going to give FamilyLife Today listeners”—any of you who would like it—“we’re going to give you a free download of the Logos Bible Software system, along with a library of more than $2,000 worth of books, for free!”

All of this because we want to see more people engaging with God’s Word. I use Logos all the time. Logos is an invaluable tool for both personal Bible study and for serious study. We hope that, when you get it, you’ll find out how exciting it is to be able—on your computer, on your phone, on your mobile device, your pad, wherever you are—to study God’s Word. The download is free. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com, and we hope you’ll be spending more time in God’s Word in 2020.

Over the last couple of weeks, we’ve heard from many of our FamilyLife Today listeners who contacted us before the end of the year to make a yearend contribution. David Robbins, the president of FamilyLife, is here with us today. I haven’t seen any updated numbers, and I know we’re still counting; right?

David: Yes, that’s right. Mail is still coming in from the holiday. I just—where we are, though, I know is how grateful and excited I am, and encouraged, by you joining with us and helping more marriages and families.

As I think about 2020 and what’s ahead, I’m praying that we will reach more people/that we will engage more marriages and help more families. We really do believe, at
FamilyLife, that the need is more urgent than ever. This is not a time to scale back/this is not a time to just stay the course; this is a time to press in and really trust God for more, because the family unit needs more help than it ever has needed.

Bob: I know you are committed to FamilyLife continuing to provide help and hope for marriages and families; but you want to see those, who have been helped and who have hope, start to reach out to others.

David: I mean, it’s the way the kingdom grows. God puts His Spirit inside of each one of us; and as we are transformed, we get to participate in helping others experience the transformation power found in the gospel and through Jesus.

Your giving helps us—your end-of-year giving/your continued giving as we go into this new year—it helps us make everything we do possible, whether that’s providing help and hope to someone, who really doesn’t know where to turn, or whether that’s giving you resources to take it to your neighbor.

Bob: Well, again, thanks to all of you who gave a donation at yearend; and thanks to those of you who donate, month in and month out, as Legacy Partners.

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 Robert and Nancy Wolgemuth are going to be with us to talk about God’s providence in every area of life, including our relationships. You can trust God to write your story. We’ll talk with them about that Monday. I hope you can be with us for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our hosts, Dave and Ann Wilson, I’m Bob Lepine. 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.

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