Part 0 of 1: The Basics of a Healthy Christian Life
with
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Welcome to The Table, where we discuss issues of God and culture. I'm Darrell Bock, Executive Director for Cultural Engagement at the Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement, what we simply call the Hendricks Center.

And we're here today with Dennis Rainey who is CEO and President of FamilyLife and host of FamilyLife Today. So, he does media, he does ministry to families. He's host of A Weekend to Remember, the marriage getaway, which several people in ministry have been on and have found extremely valuable. He's a writer of multiple books.

Dennis, it's a real privilege to have you with us today.

It's good to be with you, Darrell, I appreciate your ministry here on The Table; you guys do a great job.

Well, thank you very much. We are gonna take a look at really a message that I heard you five at the National Religious Broadcasters, a little over a year ago, that I thought was just terrific and was really a helpful, helpful ministry.

So, what I want to do, to start off with so people can get to know you a little bit, is talk a little bit about your life in ministry, what you've done, and then we'll talk secondly, after that, about kind of where this message came from and why you think it's an important message for people to hear.

Yeah, I appreciate that. I was involved in a true spiritual awakening, I think, at the University of Arkansas back in the late '60s. Out of that, there were 30 of us went into the ministry. I went into Campus Crusade for Christ, what was then Campus Crusade, and it's now Cru, and I worked with high school kids all over the country for five years.

I did a stent there in Dallas/Fort Worth and decided that all the roads were leading back to somebody's house. What I was seeing happen in the lives of young people back then, in the early '70s, was dramatic in terms of how a marriage and a family impacted the youth of today.
And so, I decided to roll up my sleeves and come to Dallas Theological Seminary and studied everything Dr. Hendricks could throw at me, Dr. Pentecost, others. It was a wonderful experience at Dallas. I got the MABS which served me well in what I was doing.

And then, in 1976, joined with two other couples and started what was then called the Marriage Preparation and Family Emphasis of Cru. And there was no plan on this being a ministry. In fact, it was called an "emphasis," which is just one notch below a tick on a hound dog. It was not a very esteemed ministry at that point.

But we started ministering to the staff of Cru. All the engaged – single people or engaged people who were getting married. And long story made short, they would come to this conference. They'd get the biblical blueprints.

And we really took the better part of, I would say, the first 20 years constantly studying the scriptures, seeing if we could reduce it down to the essence of what the Bible teaches about marriage and family, and created what we call the "blueprints" for a marriage and a family.

And when a husband and a wife both have the same set of blueprints, you can build a house, if it's a single set of blueprints. But when you got two imperfect builders with two sets of blueprints, that's gonna be trouble. And that's why I think we have difficulty in the Christian community today. We've not equipped our single people, engaged couples, newly-married couples, or married couples with a single set of blueprints that spell out how God does build the house, those who labor in building houses today.

And we've now trained more than three million people through our events around the United States, more than that around the world. We're in 109 countries of the world. Got a daily radio program called FamilyLife Today that speaks to about a million-and-a-half people a week.

And we've just found that wherever you go, whether it's America or another country, that family is an international language and, Darrell, I think family for the Church. And I know a lot of your viewers work in churches and certainly go to church and are looking for a way to reach the lost.
I think family is like a Trojan horse to be able to take the topic of the family and to get into people's heads and hearts and lives and to speak with them about Jesus Christ, His claims, and how the Word of God can bring life where there is death. He can bring hope where there is none. And this year, it's really been a great year evangelistically at our conferences.

People don't think of family life being an evangelistic ministry, but we've already had over a thousand people receive Christ at our Weekend to Remember marriage getaways. In fact, I just heard a story last weekend where we had hired an interpreter for deaf couples.

And there was a husband and a wife amidst those who were deaf in the audience – and audience of, I don't know, 600-700 people, but a small number who were deaf. And they came to the conference. Their marriage was nearly over. They didn't have any hope for it lasting. But both of them, without the other knowing, bowed their heads and yielded to Christ and received Christ as Savior and Lord and left there with new life in Christ, but also with new hope for their marriage and their family.

And I never dreamed, in my wildest imagination, that I'd be doing something like this. But if you look at the Bible and see how it starts, the Bible starts with a marriage in the book of Genesis. It ends with another marriage in the book of Revelation. And marriage and family are central to what God's doing on planet Earth.

And I think what happened, Darrell, is as a young seminary graduate and a guy eager to serve Christ, Barbara and I stumbled onto one of the richest goldmines of ministry that exists today. And this year we're celebrating our 40th year. We call it "FamilyLife: Proud Sponsor of Anniversaries." Yours and ours and all the people we've helped over the years.

So, it's been a great adventure to serve Christ, to walk by faith. A lot of challenges, as you might imagine. I never dreamed, Darrell, that I'd end up with a target on my chest because of standing for biblical marriage and biblical family.
But we do that every day on our radio program, at our conferences, and I gotta tell you, I think the Body of Christ is looking for help. They're looking for hope, and they're looking for those who will stand on behalf of Scripture and say, "This is what the Bible teaches. God hasn't stuttered. He has clearly declared marriage was between a man and a woman for a lifetime in a covenant-keeping relationship."

And I think that's our territory as followers of Christ. We need to regain the high ground and be known more by what we're for than what we're against. So, that's a high flyby on 46 years of ministry, Darrell, including Dallas Seminary. But it's been a great privilege.

Darrell Bock: That's great. Well, your 40 years now. Were you talking about 40 years for FamilyLife, or 40 years that you've been married? That wasn't clear to me.

Dennis Rainey: Forty years for FamilyLife. We started in 1976 after I graduated from Dallas, and 2016 is our 40th anniversary.

Darrell Bock: That's great. Well, it's been quite a ministry. And so, you sound like you actually – you introduced a whole nother podcast that we could do on marriage and the family. So, I may hold you to that for down the road.

Let's talk about this message and where it came from. You've entitled it "Seven Non-Negotiables for the Battle." And there are all kinds of the things that I could ask just about the title, but I think what I'll do, where did the message come from, and where have you used it? And where's it headed? I hear it's headed towards a book. So, give us a little bit of feel for what we're about to discuss.

Darrell Bock: Well, Mark Bailey, President of Dallas, of course, asked me to speak at graduation. And he didn't know, I don't think, that I had been asked to speak at another graduation of a seminary – Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago. And I'd already had a chance to think this through.

And I thought, "What do you say? What does a commencement speaker say when it's all been said, when it's all been studied, over 12 months, 24 months, 36 months, and in some cases 5 years or longer and working on a ThM or a Ph.D. in seminary? What do you say to a seminary class?"
And I thought, "I'm gonna give 'em a gift. I'm going to give them a gift." And I'll reach here in my desk, hang on here. I had these printed, and I gave a graduation gift. I think you might be able to see this.

*Darrell Bock*  
Mm-hmm.

*Dennis Rainey*  
I gave a graduation gift to every seminary graduate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and also there undergraduate school, and then again at Dallas Seminary. And on one side, I've got Seven Non-Negotiables, and on the other side I list 'em. And I learned this – this will be worth the entire broadcast for some of your listeners. I learned something – one of the most powerful tools I've ever learned in all of ministry, Darrell, from Bill Bright. You know what it's called?

*Dennis Rainey*  
Hmm?

*Darrell Bock*  
It's called the "power of lamination." If you take seven points, and you put it on a card, and you just print it, it's X. But if you laminate it, Darrell, it's X2. It's the power of lamination. So, I have these cards laminated and gave out gifts to all the graduates. And it was an effort, really, all kidding aside. It was an effort to just recognize that these men and women had given their lives to study of the scriptures and getting ready to head out into the marketplace.

And I just kind of pushed back from my Bible, and I thought, "What are the major themes of the Scripture that they just need to be reminded of?" And I'm sure someone can probably think of seven more. There's probably a hundred non-negotiables of the Christian faith, truth be known, but I tried to put seven together and just as a way of exhorting, imploring, inviting, encouraging seminary graduates.

And maybe someday they'll pull this card out of their billfold or their purse or their pocket and maybe, in a moment of temptation, be reminded that one of the non-negotiables to keep 'em following Christ.
As you know, ministry is cross country, and it's a long-distance race, and it grows wearisome sometimes, and we have to be reminded of some simple things along the way. And I'm kind of a basic person, Darrell. I love things made simple so I can grasp them.

**Darrell Bock**

Well, what I so enjoy about this is how relationally grounded this is. You really have taken really seven basic ways we relate to God, and you've -- and they're all structured the same way. There's some aspect of our relationship to God, at a relational level. And then, on the other hand, there's a contrast to it. So, they're all built the same way.

And so, I think we just -- if we don't -- if we keep going, all we'll do is introduce the seven non-negotiables and never talk about 'em. But let me -- let's go through them one at a time. And the first one is pretty transparent, "Seek God and not sin." So, that's Number One. And what were you getting at when you raised this. You said you had a Scripture for each one of 'em; so, feel free to let us know what the Scripture is assigned to it, and we'll go from there.

**Dennis Rainey**

Well, the book of Amos, Amos Chapter 5, everybody knows there's a theme of Chapter 5 that the prophet just over and over again hammers us with. And he says, "Seek Me that you may live." Now, that'd make a great slogan. A bunch of single-syllable words. "Seek Me that you may live."

God's trying to get his message across to us as pilgrims. And you know what a pilgrim does. He's on his way to a mission, but a pilgrim can wander. And as I thought about this, and as I thought about what Amos exhorted us to do in verse 4 of Chapter 5, verse 6, verse 14 says, "Seek good and not evil that you may live." It's just a great reminder for us who have hearts that tend to wander, to keep coming back to the truth.

I think I started that message -- you can correct me if I'm wrong here, but the one you heard at National Religious Broadcasters, I think I started it with a quote by Tom Skinner. And I think I ended the message with a quote by Tom Skinner. But it has to do here with wandering, doubting, struggling with our faith. And I think those of us who have been to seminary and have been trained can do all of the above.
But Tom Skinner, when I was a college student, my path crossed his. We couldn't have had more diverse backgrounds. He was from Brooklyn; I was from a small town north of Branson in Southwest Missouri. He grew up in a gang, the preacher's son; I grew up in a town of 1,300 people and so small you had to have a prescription to get a Coke in town.

And he came to faith, though, over the radio. And he gave a message at the University of Arkansas, and it was pretty radical, interest hose days, because he was African-American, and there weren't a lot of African-American speakers invited to white Baptist Churches back then. But H. D. McCarty, my friend and mentor, invited him to come down and speak. And he gave this quote at the beginning and end of each of the days he spoke, five days in a row. And it hit me, because it really encapsulates a little bit here of "Seek Me that you may live."

He said this – he said, "I spent a long time trying to come to grips with my doubts, when suddenly I realized I had 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."

You know, as our heart wanders, we can either major in the minors, or we can come back to the truth of the Scriptures and the reality of the empty tomb, and Christ is alive. He's risen from the dead. He's died for our sins, and He's seated at the right hand of the Father. And we can come to grips with what we believe. And I think this "Seek God, not sin" really hits at the core of where we are. We have to just keep coming back to God, keep coming back to the truth, not caving in to our doubts, not caving in to those questions we can't answer, but determining what we believe in a culture that desperately needs us to do that and declaring that to a needy people in our nation.

Darrell Bock

Well, that's a great place to start. And, of course, there's a wonderful text in Proverbs that alludes to it, it seems to me, as well, and that is, "The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord." And that takes us to Number Two, "Fear God, not men." A very important idea, very much at the center of Jesus' ministry as well. So, what were you getting at on that one?
Well, the fear of the Lord is one of the anchor – I think one of the anchor teachings of the Old Testament. Of course, the New Testament speaks a great deal of the love of God. I think it's when you couple the love of God and the fear of God together, you get the right approach to God.

And I think we've lost a lot of the fear of God today, Darrell. We don't hear many messages about the judgment of God, the wrath of God, about Hell. And the book of Proverbs begins, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And Proverbs 19:23 says, "The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied, and he will not e visited by harm."

Another passage says, in essence, kind of summarizes at this point, the fear of the Lord leads to a good conscience and a good night's sleep. And shame does a lot to our souls. And I think the fear of the Lord was meant to keep us out of the mud puddle of sin and out of the trap of pleasing men and call us to put God in His rightful place and to fear Him.

I tell the story early in my ministry I attended the Billy Graham School of Writing in Minneapolis. I was not a writer. I got one of the lowest grades I have ever received in typing and in English. I did not do well, Darrell, as a student, a young man in high school, before I went to college. And so, I decided I wanted to write.

So, I went to Billy Graham's School of Writing and stayed at this Holiday Inn that had one of the slowest elevators in the world. And I was on the third floor, and I pushed the button, and I could hear it grinding its way up. And I thought, "This thing is going to take forever. I'm just going to walk out and down the steps. And as I walked out and down the steps, there on the steps, right in front of me, was, I assume, a Playboy magazine. It was centerfold laid out.

And I'm amazed at how many thoughts a human being can have in a millisecond. I thought, "Wow, that is one incredibly fine specimen of the female race." And then I thought, "No one will know if I pick this up." Then I thought, "God will know." And then I thought, "I'll have to tell Barbara, my wife."
And so, I literally, in those moments thought all the way through that, stepped over the magazine, went down the stairs, went to the school. Twelve hours later, after dinner, came back to the same hotel, obviously to go to my room. Pushed the button. I could hear it grinding its way down and thought about how long it would take to get down.

And I literally had forgotten what I had run into at the beginning of the day, plus who would think that 12 hours later, there would still be a trap set for me at the top of those stairs? And the reality was it was still there. And I think the fear of the Lord was what turned me away, at that instant.

And I wish I could tell you that every time I have confronted sin, I have confronted pleasing men, that I have turned away from that and feared the Lord and reverenced Him and lifted him up and sought to please Him. I haven't, but I would say that over my lifetime, the fear of the Lord has kept me out of a lot of traps and has kept me faithful to my wife, and has kept me faithful to my family, and also kept me faithful to the Lord that I love.

I think it's a center post of the Christian faith. I think we need to be talking more about the fear of the Lord today, Darrell. Someone has said, "Sin would have fewer takers if its consequences occurred immediately." And I think the fear of the Lord keeps us away from sin, away from pleasing men, and guides us toward a holy life.

Darrell Bock
Well, that's two of the seven. We're kinda running out of time here on our initial segment. But let's try and see if we can sneak the third one in, in about a minute here. It's pretty straightforward and really the rest of what we do elaborates this in many ways. It's "Love God and not the world."

Dennis Rainey
You know how did Jesus summarize the Old Testament? Love God and love one another. Jesus embodied the Great Commandment, and He commanded us to do the same. Our hearts were designed to love something. I forget who it was that said this – was it St. Augustine who said, "The human heart is an idol factory," or was it Calvin? Was it John Calvin? Do you remember?

Darrell Bock
I have no idea, no.
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**Dennis Rainey**

It is an idol factory. Our heart was designed to love something. And when we don't love God, we fill it with something else. And I think this non-negotiable is one that needs to be revisited from time to time. Just go back to the greatest commandment Jesus ever gave. The essence of it is to love God.

Bill Bright used to speak frequently to us, as staff members, about not leaving and not losing your first love. I think the ministry can become a mistress. I think activity and service can take the place of God in our hearts. I look back over my life, and I think my heart can not only wander, but it can idolize that which was only meant for God.

And I just have to constantly come back to what I was talking about a bit earlier, the need to refresh my first love. And truthfully, Darrell, one of the things I've been trying to do in my quiet time, when I read the Scriptures in the morning – see, I've been trying to spend time with the Gospels, just around the life of Christ.

And I've really had some fun times just looking at His life and listening to His words and how He addressed His opposition, how He loved people who were broken. And He was a great lover of people, but He was also one who spoke the truth.

And today, we're dealing with some thorny issues. When you start talking about marriage and family and same-sex marriage and transgender and all the issues swirling about us, we have to keep truth and grace in proper tension with each other. We have to keep love and a commitment to truth in that same tension as well. And I think we all need to go back to that first grade of faith and the first grade of loving Jesus Christ, with that kind of wonder of loving Him, and keep revisiting that all the rest of our days of our lives.

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah. I find it fascinating. You know, I spent my life, of course, in the Gospels. It's almost all that I teach here at Dallas. And I find it interesting that Jesus ends up being so attractive to people who were labeled as sinners and who knew they were sinners, and yet there was something about the way that He did that combination that drew people's attention. And I think there was a sincerity about people understanding that He really did care about them, even in the midst of sometimes offering critique, that kept their ears and their eyes open.
And I think we need more of that. I think sometimes we're a little – we're so quick to be harsh and so quick to be critical, that people don't know that we care. And caring is a very, very important part of showing God's love and God's care for us.

After spending a lot of time in the Gospels, I bet you identify – well, I won't say this for you Darrell, I'll let you say it – I would have made a good Pharisee. I kinda determined that there's a lot of Pharisee in me around wanting to hold to the truth with kind of that long, bony finger that points at the people.

Yep, and I call it "Jimmy Cagney theology."

There you go. And I just – I want the Savior to live and love through me and help me know how to interact with people who don't agree with me, who don't have the same worldview as I have. This past week, our broadcast is going to be aired a bit later on in the summer, but this past week I just interviewed a guy who's the author of Messy Grace.

Oh, yeah, Caleb Kaltenbach.

Caleb is a graduate of Dallas. And Caleb grew up with divorced parents. His mom –

Yeah, we've had him on a podcast. We walked through his life. Actually, twice we've done a podcast with him.

Yeah, so, you know that he had a lesbian mom who was with a partner, and a dad who was a closet homosexual. And we just went to school on him training us and coaching us about how to love people who don't have a Christian worldview.

That's right.

And it was a great mentoring time, because I think we all need to, in this culture – he said it the other day. He said, "We have to realize we are no longer the home team; we are the visiting team."
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**Darrell Bock**
Yep, yep. No, it's very much true. And I've had a similar conversation with exactly that metaphor with Duane Litfin, former President of Wheaton College. And one of the ways that Jesus did this kind of interaction was to not – sometimes He didn't make statements. He either told stories or asked questions. And He let the story or the question open up the possibilities for thinking about things in a different way. And I think sometimes we tell too much and don't illustrate enough.

**Dennis Rainey**
No doubt.

**Darrell Bock**
And so, this is an important one, "Love God and not the world." The way of the world is obviously not always the way of God, and so keeping those two separate is important.

Let's go to the fourth one, or we're going to run out of time. Number Four, "Believe God, not the deceiver."

**Dennis Rainey**
Yeah, this is a good reminder. I just want to read you Jesus' – where we're speaking about His words here. Let me just read you His words when he was speaking of the devil. He said, in John 8:44, "You are of your father, the devil. And your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

I think all of life is one long process for deciding who you're going to believe. Believe God, or believe the deceiver. And I forget who it was who said this, that we need to counsel our soul wisely. As we talk to ourself, we need to remind ourselves of the truth. I am glad I am married to a great wife who although she never attended seminary, she is a great theologian. She's an artist, but she's a great student of the Word.

And frequently she takes me back to the Book, and not in a confrontive way, but as a great reminder, "Dennis, believe God. Believe the truth about what He said about you and about how He's going to use you. He's not done with you. Keep on trusting Him."

And faith, if you look at the Old Testament, there's a lot – the Israelites flunked out. Because they didn't walk with God and didn't believe Him. In fact, they wasted away in the wilderness because they didn't believe God.
I think there's a great warning for us today. Are we believing God for too much? Are we trusting Him and not believing Him for too little?

**Darrell Bock**
Yeah, and it's interesting. You've got a kind of a, if I can say it, a deceptive trinity here that's built into this. I just noticed this. You've got men, world, and the deceiver. Between those three, you're in danger if you're not careful.

**Dennis Rainey**
Yeah, you are. That's really – kinda summarize it doesn't it?

**Darrell Bock**
Yeah. So, I – this is another one where, again, it also says something about being careful about our instincts, and that leads us into Number Five, which says, "Obey God and not your appetites."

You know, between what the world teaches us, what men tell us, what the deceiver wants us to do, particularly in thinking about ourselves and perhaps making us more selfish than we ought to be, making us into thinking that we can be little gods when we're not. The call is to obey God and not the appetites.

**Dennis Rainey**
Yeah, you know, I'll tell you, as I get older – and, Darrell, you should comment on this – my sin nature doesn't get any sweeter.

**Darrell Bock**
Mm-hmm.

**Dennis Rainey**
My appetites – I wish I could say they're all sanctified. But it seems like they're more contrasted than ever before with what God's trying to do in my life. And I'm just realizing that this subject of obeying God – again, I'm not remembering who said this – "The door of opportunity swings on the hinges – the small hinges of obedience." And who knows what kind of opportunities we missed because we missed the chance to obey God and not follow Him and what He wanted us to do?

I'm excited about the next season of my life. I think every season is marked by walking by faith. And ultimately, as you walk by faith, you gotta learn and also obey God as you step out and trust Him, just like you did in the beginning.
I look back on the steps of faith I made when we started FamilyLife. I didn't know what I was doing. I did not – I don't know how you started out teaching, Darrell, whether you were an eloquent professor or not, like you are now.

*Darrell Bock*  
I was all of 28 years old.

*Dennis Rainey*  
Yeah. God had to remind me the other day. He said, "You know, did I have your back when you started in ministry back at the beginning?"

"Yeah."

"Do I have your back now as you continue to step out?"

And the answer is, "Absolutely."

So, obey Him. Trust Him for what He's got for you today and be obedient in the small things.

*Darrell Bock*  
There's a core idea that I think is running through all these. I'm gonna review 'em, since we're through five of the seven: Seek God, not sin. Fear God, not men. Love God, not the world. Believe God, not the deceiver. Obey God, not your appetites. And I think underneath all of that is a fundamental loyalty and allegiance to God.

You know, I think about the temptations that Jesus faced. And when you boil it down, His responses, there really is a commitment to an allegiance and loyalty to God that's driving Him in His responses. And He will not be unfaithful.

*Dennis Rainey*  
Yeah, and fresh surrender needs to occur every day.

*Darrell Bock*  
Mm-hmm. Yeah, we had a little blip there in the sound. Was that "fresh" surrender? Is that what you said?

*Dennis Rainey*  
I did. Fresh surrender.

*Darrell Bock*  
Yeah.
Yeah, I find that every day God has opportunities to obey Him in the midst of my day that are carefully disguised as people who could be also described as problems or blockers or circumstances that I don't care for. And yet fresh surrender to Jesus Christ, asking Him to love people through me.

I was in a meeting yesterday, and I had to just check myself, "Now, is this your ego? Are you pushing back on this person because they don't agree with you? What's your humility and teachability factor here?"

And I like to say you never outgrow your need to admit a wrong, whether in your marriage, with your kids, or in your profession. In fact, it's always good to remember, when's the last time you had to ask your spouse to forgive you? That's a good question for all of us to ask.

You know, there are several thoughts that pop up in my mind, because I kind of have a running joke with God – my wife and I, actually do, and it kind of takes two forms. One is, I'll never tell God I'll never do something,' cause that's a guarantee I'm gonna have to do it.

And the second one is there are sometimes people who get under your skin who God seems to constantly have you be reacquainted with in life, just to remind that there are things to learn.

And so, those are kind of two classes of things that I think God does on a regular basis, just to remind us that, "I am forming and shaping you into a different shape than what you had, and I'm using either this situation or that circumstance that you said you never wanted to walk into, or this person that you don't like being around, but that you have to work with in order to make this happen."

And after a while, I find myself, particularly with people who fit this category, I find myself – catching myself saying, "You know, God has this person in your life for a reason. And it's probably a good reason; it's probably something you need."
Dennis Rainey: I think every day we have to have fresh surrender. We have to decide we yield again to the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords and subjugate our ego, maintain our, hopefully, a humble attitude and a teachability.

One of the things that Proverbs constantly implores me to do is to learn, is to be teachable, is to hear, is to be willing to admit fault. And I think you can tell if you're surrendered or not. A Christian leader I know used to say, "You can always tell if you're a slave of Christ, because you'll be treated like one."

Darrell Bock: Huh.

Dennis Rainey: And I wonder sometimes if we're not wanting to be treated a little more highly than a slave of Christ, when that really is our ultimate calling.

Darrell Bock: You know, one of the things that I talk constantly about is the idea of Christians needing to lose their sense of entitlement, because that actually gets in the way of their walk. And when we think that we're owed something, that usually means that we're operating not out of the Spirit, but in some other mode. We may be loving the world a little too much, and wanting too much for our appetites.

And so, that's why God puts these difficult circumstances and difficult people in our lives in some ways, because it's a way of teaching us how to relate and how to relate well in a context where sometimes we may have to be a little more sensitive than we normally would be.

Dennis Rainey: You're really touching on the sixth of the seven non-negotiables, which is "Serve God, not self."

Darrell Bock: That's right. Yeah, 'cause in the end, that is a big one because our tendency is always to want to put ourselves in control of what's going on around us.
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**Dennis Rainey**  
Yeah, it's back to Joshua's words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And that means – you alluded to this earlier – going anywhere, doing anything He wants you to do. I always kinda shudder when I hear of a follower of Christ say, "I'll do anything except go to this location," or, "live here," or, "do that." That's a dangerous statement. You said it earlier, Darrell, but we need to be willing to obey God and do whatever He calls us to do regardless.

**Darrell Bock**  
Yeah. And serving God and not self means that oftentimes the self-interest that drives a lot of our decision-making has to be set aside. We really have to examine ourselves to ask, "Do I want this because it's something I want, and it puts me in the way of other people and serving other people? Or do I want this because this is something God is calling me to do, and I'm being faithful to Him?"

**Dennis Rainey**  
Right. And usually the ministry has so many ways – and I take it that many of our viewers are in some kind of ministry, either as laymen or as paid pastorate, etcetera. The ministry challenges us, "Are we gonna maintain that humility and yieldedness to Christ?" We've talked about it several times as we've been through here. Serving God, not self, I don't think you ever outlive that one.

**Darrell Bock**  
No, you don't. And, of course, the core sin at the beginning was – came from the deceiver, offered Adam the idea that what God was trying to prevent him from doing was from becoming God. And, well, God was trying to prevent Adam from becoming God, because when we become God, and we set God off to the side, that often leads to very bad results.

**Dennis Rainey**  
I'm reminded of Isaiah's words when God asked the question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

And remember Isaiah's famous words, "Here am I; send me."

That's not a bad place to be every day. Just declare to the Lord God Almighty, "Here I am. Whatever You want to do." And frankly, Darrell, one of the things, I recently spoke at a Christian camp in Central California, and I just decided – I prayed a fresh prayer, and I've prayed it many times since, but I said, "Lord, would you send Barbara and me to set and minister to someone over dinner tonight? I just want to be available to go where you want me to go, where you want us to minister."
And we sat down at a table, and we heard an heroic story of a guy who had been in prison, who had a one-tenth of one percent chance of getting off of death row. And God got him off of death row through redemption through Christ, got him a job, and it was a great story. We just all sat around the table, worshiping God as we heard this guy declare God's work in his life.

I would have missed that if I would have walked by sight, if I hadn't prayed that prayer, "Lord, just take me where you want me to go." There was one seat that was – for two people, that was right at that table. I'm so glad we sat there.

**Darrell Bock**

Wow, yeah. And God will bring those people and those circumstances into your life if you keep your eyes and your heart open. That happens all the time.

Well, the last one's a pretty important one. It says, "Worship God, not comfort."

**Dennis Rainey**

The older I get, the more I enjoy my creature comforts. And yet, I am seeing that God is weaning me from this world and its comforts and preparing me for Heaven. I told a friend, just a few hours ago, I said, "You know, there is a Heaven, and it's not here." God is trying to take our love for the world and the love for comfort, and He is wanting us to get ready to worship Him for all of eternity. And I have no idea what that looks like. We get glimpses of it in the Scripture, but I got a feeling – a very solid, belief now that it's not gonna be boring.

**Darrell Bock**

Mm-hmm. And I think this worship God idea comes back to something that we've been talking about through here, and that is the idea of loyalty and allegiance. It's giving honor to Whom honor is due. It's declaring the worth of God. And of course God has a worth that is – that sets him apart, that makes him sanctified, and that is unique.

And so, we worship God. And I think worship is word that we've narrowed too much.

**Dennis Rainey**

Uh-huh.
We think about worship as something that happens at a 11:00 to 12:00 on Sunday, and maybe on a Wednesday night, and maybe when I'm in Bible study. But worship is actually something we do all the time, or at least we have the occasion to do it all the time.

I have tried to develop this discipline, Darrell, of thanking God for a healthy body that is able to work in the yard on the weekends. The older I get –

Now that's a stretch.

That is a stretch. I hurt my knee here about ten days ago; so, I was having to give thanks for a new injury at this point in my life. But I think worship can occur around the simple matters of life that we enjoy.

Oh, absolutely.

A sunset. My kids know – I've got 6 kids, 22 grandchildren. I love to send out pictures of the sunset off of our back deck. We overlook the Ouachita Mountains in Arkansas. We've got a beautiful ridge that our home is located on. And we have some spectacular sunsets. And those bring about worship. They declare the grandeur of God.

So does a butterfly. The God who made 40,000 different kinds of butterflies is a God who I think demands and commands our worship and to ascribe to Him the grandeur that truly is His. What a privilege to see Him at work in other people's lives and as well as creation.

You know, the one that I like to do is I like to say, "Think what it takes for you to have a bowl of Wheaties in the morning. Think of all the jobs that have to be done and everything that needs to take place so that you can pour that grain into that bowl and put your sugar on it and put the milk on top of it.

And think of all the jobs that have to be done, from the person who grows the grain, to the person who puts the material up at the grocery store, to the roads that were built so that it could be hauled from one place to – I mean it's endless, once you start thinking about it – to the packaging that goes in it, to the person who designed the box.
I mean it's a multiplicity of jobs that we see when thought happens, and we can thank God that He's given people – because He's made them in their image, and He's made 'em creative, that we live in the world, and we have access to the multiple things that we do out of life because He's been good to us and given us people around us who are creative and effective in what they do.

**Dennis Rainey**

Your bowl of Wheaties is a good one. As you started talking about that, I thought about I want a personal mission to worship God and think those who are made in His image, such as TSA agents at the airport.

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah.

**Dennis Rainey**

They are made in the image of God. They're there, protecting us, and yet we are rude to them. I love to thank them for their job. And after I've thanked them, and they go, "Well, thank you for saying thank you," and I go, "I bet you get thanked a lot, don't you?" They said they've been spit on, they've been cursed, people are rude.

I'm also wanting to say thank you to police officers and to men and women who work interest eh restroom at the airport, to say, "Thank you for your work. What a great job you're doing." That's about – that's all about worshiping God, I think.

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah, we can worship God in lots of opportunities. Well, let me go through the seven real quickly again, as I'm thanking you for giving us your Seven Non-Negotiables for the Battle: Seek God, not sin. Fear God, not men. Love God, not the world. Believe God, not the deceiver. Obey God, not your appetites. Serve God, not self. Worship God, not comfort.

We thank you for helping us think through our spiritual walk and having us think through how we can better interact with a loving and caring God.

**Dennis Rainey**

I appreciate it, Darrell. And if anybody wants a copy of one of these cards, can we make 'em available through the seminary if they write the seminary?

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah, well, you can send 'em to the Center, and we'll send 'em back to the person who writes us.
The Table Podcast

Dennis Rainey  Somebody wants a copy of this, and if we run out, we'll laminate some more.

Darrell Bock  That sounds great, Dennis. Thank you for being a part of The Table.

And we thank you for being a part of The Table, and we look forward to having you back again with us soon.