



Helping Families Thrive™

8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920
FocusOnTheFamily.com
719-531-3400

May 31, 2016

Internal Revenue Service
P.O. Box 12192
Covington, KY 41012-0192

VIA U.S. CERTIFIED MAIL –
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Re: Focus on the Family
EIN: 95-3188150

Dear Sir or Madam:

Focus on the Family, a California non-profit corporation, hereby requests a reclassification of foundation status from a non-private foundation under Internal Revenue Code (“Code”) Section 509(a)(2) to a non-private foundation under Code sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(i). In that connection, we have enclosed: (1) IRS Form 8940, Request for Miscellaneous Determination, Under Section 507, 509(a), 4940, 4942, 4945, and 6033 of the Code; (2) IRS Form 1023, Schedule A-Churches, with the relevant responses to each question attached; (3) IRS Form 2848, Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative; and (4) User Fee of \$400 by check payable to “United States Treasury.”

The Internal Revenue Service (“Service”) affirmed Focus on the Family as a tax-exempt organization described in Code Sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(2) by determination letter dated January 16, 1980 (please see attached). Since its inception, Focus on the Family has continuously maintained such status as a tax-exempt organization that is not a private foundation.

The Board of Directors of Focus on the Family recently confirmed that Focus on the Family was established and has been historically operated as a church. As such, the Board of Directors has authorized the Officers of Focus on the Family to seek a determination from the Service that Focus on the Family is a church and therefore should be reclassified as a non-private foundation under Code section 509(a)(1) by reason of being a church as described in Code section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).

BACKGROUND

Focus on the Family is a California nonprofit religious corporation recognized under Code Section 501(c)(3) as a tax-exempt organization that is not a private foundation pursuant to Code Section 509(a)(2) and is eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable donations under Code

Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). The primary purpose of Focus on the Family is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ by protecting traditional values and the family. The mission statement of Focus on the Family is as follows: "To cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible by nurturing and defending the God-ordained institution of the family and promoting biblical truths worldwide." The vision of Focus on the Family is "redeemed families, communities, and societies worldwide through Christ." The six guiding principles of Focus on the Family include: (1)the preeminence of evangelism, (2)the permanence of marriage, (3)the value of children, (4)the sanctity of human life, (5)the importance of social responsibility, and (6)the value of male and female.

Focus on the Family has approximately 600 individuals who constitute its regular congregation. Directors, officers and employees of Focus on the Family must sign a statement of faith, provide a personal testimony of a relationship with Jesus Christ and agree that they are in accord with Focus on the Family's mission, vision and core beliefs. Focus on the Family convenes monthly chapel meetings for its ministry personnel in a central auditorium that visitors are welcome to join on campus. Employees also participate in small group daily devotions during the work week. The primary source of income for Focus on the Family is contributions from individual donors.

Focus on the Family is governed by its directors and officers, who assume the equivalent authority and powers held by elders and deacons in other churches. Focus on the Family has created and developed numerous programs for religious training of the young and old. Additionally, each day, the Focus on the Family Daily Broadcast radio program offers biblical insights and practical assistance on issues relating to marriage, parenting, and faith. Jim Daly and co-host John Fuller interview a wide range of respected Christian teachers and other guests during this 30-minute program. For 30 years, Focus on the Family has also produced the *Adventures in Odyssey* radio program, a series of audio dramas offering families hope, encouragement and important life lessons based on biblical truths. Intended especially for children ages 8 to 12, it is also popular with adult listeners. (The program reached an industry milestone in 2008, becoming the longest-running weekly drama with a consistent cast of characters. *Adventures in Odyssey*, in both daily and weekly versions, is now heard on over 4,050 radio facilities worldwide.)

Focus on the Family shares much in common with traditional churches with respect to purpose, function, and governance. One of the differences is that Focus on the Family does not solicit members from the community. However, Focus on the Family does have counselors who do phone outreach that provides support to families. Focus on the Family also does not ordain, license or commission ministers. However, its Board of Directors and executive cabinet carry out the functions traditionally associated with an elder board and a diaconate, respectively, in other churches.

As Focus on the Family has historically stated in its annual filing of Form 990, Return of Exempt Organization:

Focus on the Family is a nondenominational religious organization whose primary objective is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by helping to preserve traditional values and the institution of the family. The primary means of accomplishing these goals are radio broadcasts, periodicals, books, films, videos, internet and events which share the message with constituents, schools, churches and the public at large in the United States as well as around the world.

APPLICABLE LAW

The Service and the courts apply a facts and circumstances analysis to the question of whether an organization may be classified as a church under the Code.

Certain characteristics are generally attributed to churches. These attributes of a church have been developed by the IRS and by court decisions. They include:

1. distinct legal existence;
2. recognized creed and form of worship;
3. definite and distinct ecclesiastical government;
4. formal code of doctrine and discipline;
5. distinct religious history;
6. membership not associated with any other church or denomination;
7. organization of ordained ministers;
8. ordained ministers selected after completing prescribed courses of study;
9. literature of its own;
10. established places of worship;
11. regular congregations;
12. regular religious services;
13. Sunday schools for the religious instruction of the young; and
14. Schools for the preparation of its ministers.

See, e.g., Spiritual Outreach Society of v. Commissioner, 927 F.2d 335 (8th Cir. 1991). The courts and the Service have used the above factors as a guide to help in the determination of what constitutes a church under the Code. The courts have not required all of these factors to be present for an organization to be considered a church, and have stated that no one factor is controlling. See, e.g., Foundation of Human Understanding v. Commissioner, 88 T.C. 1341, 1358 (1987). However, several courts have placed special emphasis on certain of the "associational" factors establishing the presence of a "church". In particular, one court has stated that the existence of an established congregation served by an organized ministry, the provision of regular religious services and religious education for the young, and the dissemination of a doctrinal code are of central importance. See American Guidance Foundation Inc. v. United States, 490 F.Supp. 304, 306 (D.D.C. 1980). In at least one case, the United States Tax Court

has determined that an organization qualified as a church when its "associational" aspects are more than incidental, notwithstanding its considerable broadcasting and publishing efforts. See Foundation of Human Understanding v. Commissioner, 88 T.C. 1341 (1987).

CONCLUSION

For its entire existence, Focus on the Family has been a religious tax-exempt organization with many of the essential elements of a church. Focus on the Family has a substantial group of individuals constituting its congregation, a group of employees who function as the equivalent of an organized ministry, regular religious services, an extensive program of education for persons of all ages, and a doctrinal code. Focus on the Family possesses all of the "associational" aspects of a church identified by the courts, and these features are more than incidental. Focus on the Family satisfies the tests established by the Service and the courts for status as a church. As such, it is entitled to reclassification as a "church" that is a non-private foundation under Code Section 509(a)(1).

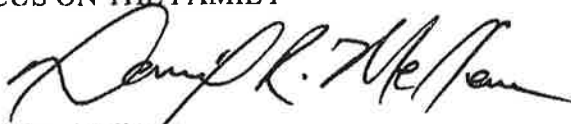
ADVERSE IMPACT FROM REQUEST DENIAL

There are a number of religious exemptions in the applicable laws that apply only to churches and church organizations. For instance, there are exemptions from certain employee benefit plan requirements for which churches and church organizations qualify. See Code §414. Also, regulations recently adopted by the Treasury Department (together with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor) exempt church organizations from mandatory coverage requirements for contraceptives. Further, churches and church organization employers are exempt from certain unemployment insurance requirements. See Code §3306. Finally, various state laws provide exemptions for organizations described as churches under the Code. These exemptions all protect Focus on the Family's religious liberty rights. Focus on the Family would be denied these important exemptions if this reclassification request is not granted.

CONFERENCE REQUESTED

Please contact James R. Blackman, Jr. (see enclosed Form 2848) if you require additional information to assist your consideration of this request for reclassification. If for any reason you intend to make an adverse determination as to the requested reclassification, a conference with the appropriate Service employees is requested prior to your final determination.

Very truly yours,
FOCUS ON THE FAMILY



Daniel R. Mellema
Treasurer / CFO

Form 1023, Schedule A Questions and Responses

The following information about Focus on the Family is presented as responses to the questions contained in Schedule A of IRS Form 1023. This information is provided to clarify and support Focus on the Family's application for reclassification as a church under Code Section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).

1a. Do you have a written creed, statement of faith, or summary of beliefs? If "Yes," attach copies of relevant documents.

Yes. Focus on the Family has several statements and beliefs that require agreement, understanding, and certification by our ministry personnel as well as our directors and officers who function as the equivalent of church elders and deacons. These include:

- Copy of Statement of Faith and Certification Document
- The Six Pillars
- Focus on the Family Ministry Evaluation Questions (Attachment 3)
- Executive Leadership Certification Document (Deacon Responsibilities Acknowledgement)

Like most Bible-believing Protestant churches, Focus on the Family's mission and purpose encompass the basic tenets of the Christian faith. It is consistent with the principles of Biblical theology, which similarly guide nearly every evangelical denomination. This includes Focus on the Family's concept of an elder-led church. All directors and ministry personnel of Focus on the Family are required to affirm their belief in and adherence to the Statement of Faith and the Pillars. In addition, the leadership affirms their adherence to the Biblical responsibilities of deacons/leaders that are clearly spelled out in God's Word (refer to the "Executive Leadership Certification Document" on page 49 and the answer to #1 1a below).

The Statement of Faith and Certification Document and the Focus on the Family Ministry Evaluation Questions are based upon Biblical teachings and Christian principles. All Focus on the Family ministry personnel and volunteers, as well as directors and officers, are required to sign the Statement of Faith and Certification Document and abide by those principles at all times.

Focus on the Family has a Statement of Faith as follows:

Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, only infallible, authoritative Word of God;

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory;

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful humanity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life;

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they who are saved unto the resurrection of life and they who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation;

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Focus' faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Directors is Focus' final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Guiding Principles

Additionally, Focus on the Family has a set of guiding principles that serves as the foundation of its ministry. Since Focus on the Family's primary reason for existence is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a practical outreach to homes, we have firm beliefs about both the Christian faith and the importance of the family. This ministry is therefore based upon six guiding philosophies that are apparent at every level throughout the organization. These "pillars" are drawn from the wisdom of the Bible and the Judeo-Christian ethic, rather than from the humanistic notions of today's theorists. In short, Focus on the Family is a reflection of what we believe to be the recommendations of the Creator Himself, who ordained the family and gave it His blessing.

The **Six Pillars** include:

The Preeminence of Evangelism

We believe that the ultimate purpose of life is to know and glorify God and to attain eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, beginning within our own families and then reaching out to a suffering humanity that needs to embrace His love and sacrifice.

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'" Mark 16:15

The Permanence of Marriage

We believe that the institution of marriage is a sacred covenant designed by God to model the love of Christ for His people and to serve both the public and private good as the basic building block of human civilization. Marriage is intended by God to be a thriving, lifelong relationship between a man and a woman enduring through trials, sickness, financial crises and emotional stresses. Therefore, Christians are called to defend and protect God's marriage design and to minister in Christ's name to those who suffer the consequences of its brokenness.

"'Haven't you read,' He replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.'" Matthew 19:4-6

The Value of Children

We believe that children are a heritage from God and a blessing from His hand. Parents are therefore accountable to Him for raising, shaping and preparing them for a life of service to His Kingdom and to humanity.

"Has not the Lord made them [a husband and wife] one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring." Malachi 2:15

The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that human life is created by God in His image. It is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions, including the preborn, the aged, the mentally disabled, those deemed unattractive, the physically challenged, and every other condition in which humanness is expressed from the single cell stage of development to natural death. Christians are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

"For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:13-14a

The Importance of Social Responsibility

We believe that God has ordained the social institutions of family, church, and government for the benefit of mankind and as a reflection of His divine nature. Therefore, Christians are called to support these institutions, according to God's design and purpose, and to protect them against destructive social influences. Such involvement is in obedience to Christ's lordship over all creation and is required by His command to care for the well-being of all people.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Genesis 2:24

"And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body." Ephesians 1:22-23a

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." Romans 13:1

The Value of Male and Female

We believe that God created humans in His image, intentionally and immutably male and female, each bringing unique and complementary qualities to sexuality and relationships. Sexuality is a glorious gift from God to be offered back to Him either in marriage for procreation, union, and mutual delight or in celibacy for undivided devotion to Christ. Christians are called to proclaim the truth and beauty of God's design and the redemption of sexual brokenness in our lives and culture through Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:1-2

1b. Do you have a form of worship? If "Yes," describe your form of worship.

Yes, there is a time for worship every weekday. We have meetings of small groups of between five and 25 individuals who gather together at the beginning of each workday to pray and study Scripture. These small groups do not assemble on days when we gather together as a body of believers for corporate worship and teaching. This large group gathering happens at least once a month. These meetings and gatherings have been convened consistently throughout the almost 40-year history of the organization.

Small group gatherings are typically structured each weekday morning as follows:

Monday: The entire staff meets in a common area for a "stand-up" prayer meeting in which updates on ministry endeavors are shared and prayers are offered for the coming week. This gathering is led by a member of the executive cabinet, serving in the same function as a deacon or deaconess.

Tuesday: Small groups (averaging six people) meet to pray for specific requests that are sent to the ministry from its constituents.

Wednesday: Several small groups gather together (averaging 80 people per meeting) to listen to a guest speaker on a spiritual topic.

Thursday: Small groups combine (into a group averaging 150 people) for a time of praise and worship music, while smaller groups (averaging eight people) gather for Bible study.

Friday: Each department gathers to pray for internal needs and to study Scripture.

In addition to the weekly stand-up prayer meeting, an all-staff chapel service happens at least once a month. All members of the Focus on the Family congregation (numbering approximately 600 individuals) attend. Additionally, visitors to the Focus on the Family campus are welcomed to attend and participate in this monthly chapel service, which is held in the "Chapelteria" (a worship auditorium that also serves as a dining area) on the Focus campus. The service is typically led by Ken Windebank, the Chief Operating Officer of Focus of the Family, serving in the role of a deacon of our organization. It is generally structured as a time for music and singing worship songs, the reading of Scripture, corporate prayer, announcements for the encouragement of the group of believers, and a lesson delivered by a visiting speaker or pastor.

2a. Do you have a formal code of doctrine and discipline? If "Yes," describe your code of doctrine and discipline.

Yes. We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired (i.e. "God-breathed" 2 Timothy 3:16) in every word, infallible, and absolutely inerrant in the original documents. We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture.

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21) and as such it is completely sufficient for making us all God wants us to be (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3) and it is the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged (John 17:17).

As such, Focus on the Family's formal code of discipline, as set forth in the Moral Policy (see page 50), is based on the principles of Matthew 18, though specific application may vary depending on the severity of the offense. As a general practice, if a congregant is living or teaching in contradiction to Scripture, then that individual is approached one-on-one and is corrected and given instruction toward the end of bringing them in line with scriptural teaching. If the behavior persists, the situation is escalated and they are approached by two or more of those in leadership who will discuss the situation in an attempt to restore the party in question to biblically aligned living. If the congregant still does not change his or her ways to comport with Scripture and the teachings of the church, they will be disassociated from the congregation. The disciplinary process is described in greater detail in the Moral Policy—see page 50.

2b. Do you have a distinct religious history? If "Yes," describe your religious history.

Yes, the ideological foundations of Focus on the Family were laid in the 1960s, when Dr. James Dobson was completing his Ph.D. in child development at the University of Southern California. He joined the faculty of Children's Hospital in Los Angeles and, in 1970, became associate clinical professor of pediatrics at the USC School of Medicine. Over the next several years, as Dr. Dobson authored his first several books, he became increasingly concerned about the breakdown of the traditional family and its negative effects on the culture at large. He began speaking in churches and started a radio ministry to reach more people. He also created a series of films to further propagate biblical principles and scriptural truths related to marriage and parenting. The films and radio broadcast enabled him to spread the message to a much larger audience. Focus on the Family was organized to further disseminate these biblical principles.

2c. Do you have literature of your own? If "Yes," describe your literature.

Yes. In addition to the Statement of Faith and the Six Pillars described in Item 1a, the Focus on the Family ministry has published many books and instructional materials which are geared toward various age groups. It started with Dr. Dobson's books *Dare to Discipline* and *The Strong Willed Child*, continued in the 1980s and 1990s with a broad range of faith-based marriage and parenting materials, and has most recently added Internet and video-based materials including *The Truth Project*, *Irreplaceable*, *The Family Project*, and *The Drop Box*. Also, for 30 years, Focus on the Family has produced the *Adventures in Odyssey* radio program, a series of audio dramas offering families hope, encouragement and important life lessons based on biblical truths. Intended especially for children ages 8 to 12, it is also popular with adult listeners. (The program reached an industry milestone in 2008, becoming the longest-running weekly drama with a consistent cast of characters. *Adventures in Odyssey*, in both daily and weekly versions, is now heard on over 4,050 radio facilities worldwide.) The program is also available online at Whitsend.org and on Salem Communication's OnePlace.com website.

Listed below are the titles of some of the *Focus on the Family* daily radio programs, along with the related guest speakers and original air dates. Attached to this document, we are also including the transcripts of these programs for your review.

"A Man Called Norman I-II" featuring Rev. Mike Adkins, 1984
(see page 53)

"The Christian Family" featuring Dr. Tony Evans, 1989
(see page 77)

"Restoring the Soul" featuring Dr. Ravi Zacharias, 1996
(see page 88)

"Orphan Care: Accepting the Call" featuring Kay Warren, wife of Pastor Rick Warren, 2009
(see page 99)

"Who is the Author of Your Faith I-II" featuring Rev. Andy Stanley, 2016
(see page 108)

3. Describe the organization's religious hierarchy or ecclesiastical government.

We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty. Christ mediates His rule in the church through the Scriptures and therefore we are following Christ's rule only to the degree that we are following the Scriptures (Luke 6:46; John 13:17; James 1:22).

Focus on the Family has traditionally been governed by its ministry Board of Directors and executive cabinet, such that the ministry Board of Directors fills the role of elders, as outlined in Scripture, while the executive cabinet fills the role of deacons and deaconesses. The ministry CEO, Jim Daly, serves as a representative of the Board/elders on the executive cabinet/diaconate.

As outlined in Scripture, the Board and executive cabinet are officers serving under Christ as elders, deacons and deaconesses, all of whom must meet their respective biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). These qualifications include numerous personal character traits and criteria set forth in the New Testament. Among other things, elders and deacons must be: above reproach, faithful in marriage, sober-minded, self-controlled, gentle, not quarrelsome, mature in the faith, humble, patient, holy, disciplined, exemplary in conduct, and so forth.

The governance and oversight of Focus on the Family is entrusted to our ministry Board of Directors, which corresponds to a church governance model that is led by a plurality of godly, biblically qualified, servant-leaders called elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 1 Peter. 5:2). The function of the elders is threefold. First, they are expected to build and develop their own lives and families in the Lord in this model (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Second, they are to feed, shepherd and pray for the flock of God (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:17-32; Acts 6:1-4). This involves teaching the truth, refuting error, and administering discipline. Third, they are to oversee and manage the entire ministry of the local church, which in this instance is Focus on the Family (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

In addition, the members of the ministry's executive cabinet serve as deacons and deaconesses who assist the church in a variety of practical ways, ministering mercy to the members of Focus on the Family (1 Timothy 3:13).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), and discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

In addition, our church government is based on the following beliefs, which are common to a wide range of church bodies throughout ecclesiastical history:

We teach the autonomy of our church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).

We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Focus on the Family, however, through our elders and our interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. Focus on the Family's elders should oversee the church and its ministries (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4). We teach that elders are to lead as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22). The ministry team is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).

4a. Do you have regularly scheduled religious services? If "Yes," describe the nature of the services and provide representative copies of relevant literature such as church bulletins.

Yes, we have meetings of small groups of between five and 25 individuals who gather together at the beginning of every work day, except on those days when we gather together as a larger body of believers for the monthly corporate worship and teaching service.

As noted above, small group gatherings are typically structured each weekday morning as follows:

Monday: The entire staff meets in a common area for a "stand-up" prayer meeting in which updates on ministry endeavors are shared and prayers are offered for the coming week. This gathering is led by a member of the executive cabinet, serving in the same function as a deacon or deaconess.

Tuesday: Small groups meet to pray for specific requests that are sent to the ministry from its constituents.

Wednesday: Several small groups gather together (averaging 80 people per meeting) to listen to a guest speaker on a spiritual topic.

Thursday: Small groups combine (into a group averaging 150 people) for a time of praise and worship music, while smaller groups gather for Bible study.

Friday: Each department gathers to pray for internal needs and to study Scripture.

In addition to the weekly stand-up prayer meeting, an all-staff chapel service happens at least once a month. All members of the Focus on the Family congregation (numbering approximately 600 individuals) attend. Additionally, visitors to the Focus on the Family campus are welcomed to attend and participate in this monthly chapel service, which is held in the "Chapelteria" (a worship auditorium that also serves as a dining area) on the Focus campus. The service is typically led by Ken Windebank, the Chief Operating Officer of Focus on the Family, serving in his role as a deacon. It is generally structured as a time for music and singing worship songs, the reading of Scripture, corporate prayer, announcements for the encouragement of the group of believers, and a lesson delivered by a visiting speaker or pastor.

4b. What is the average attendance at your regularly scheduled religious services?

The average attendance at the monthly chapel service is approximately 750. Small group meetings throughout the week typically range from five to 25 people, except in cases where several smaller groups join together for a larger worship gathering, as outlined above.

5a. Do you have an established place of worship? If "Yes," refer to the instructions for the information required.

Yes, Focus on the Family owns a building where we gather together. We have a specific chapel area that is large enough to accommodate the entire congregation, plus guests. Focus on the Family's monthly chapel services are held in our "Chapelteria," which has historically provided space for various meetings and worship services. Small group meetings may be conducted in the Chapelteria or other designated space throughout the building. In addition, our main building houses a dedicated prayer chapel that is used by various groups and individuals throughout each day for prayer.

Internal Revenue Service
May 31, 2016

Focus on the Family
EIN: 95-3188150

5b. Do you own the property where you have an established place of worship?
Yes, our building is located at:

8605 Explorer Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80920-1049.

6. Do you have an established congregation or other regular membership group? If "No," refer to the instructions.

Yes. Our ministry personnel constitute the congregation of Focus on the Family. The congregation is overseen by the deacons and deaconesses, with additional guidance and overall supervision and direction coming from the board of elders. These individuals, along with their family members and other like-minded persons, worship together at our monthly chapel services as well as in many of the small-group worship and instructional settings. In addition, we have a radio broadcast that reaches millions of people on a daily basis (although we regard our listeners as our mission field, not as members of the congregation). We distribute our ministry and teaching materials not just within our congregation, but to the public at large, hoping that others will read, understand, and adopt our beliefs and teachings about the family.

Doctrinally, we teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:21; 3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of individual churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

7. How many members do you have?

Focus on the Family has 594 ministry personnel, including our deacons. The current diaconate is comprised of the following individuals: Jim Daly, Ken Windebank, Joel Vaughan, Bob Wood, Dan Mellema, Kurt Leander, Danny Huerta, Rich Bennett, Greg Smalley, Tim Sawyer, John Bethany, Bob DeMoss, Paul Batura, Ron Reno, John Fuller, Carrie Earll, Jeannie Binkley, Tim Goeglein, Mark Pyatt, Bob Paul, Kelly Rosati, Michael Pouw, and Paul Bae. Membership also extends to family members of ministry personnel.

Our mission is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible by nurturing and defending the God ordained institution of the family and promoting Biblical truths. Our daily radio ministry reaches out to 5.5 million people each week. This program offers biblical, practical insights on marriage, parenting and spiritual growth as Jim Daly and co-host John Fuller interview a wide range of respected speakers, teachers and pastors. The vast radio network carrying the *Focus on the Family* daily broadcast continues to expand in the number of facilities and programs offered. In addition to terrestrial radio, the daily broadcast is offered as a resource on audio CD, Podcast, MP3, streaming audio, and via a mobile app. It is also available on Salem Communication's OnePlace.com website, TuneIn and Stitcher along with other web locations.

8a. Do you have a process by which an individual becomes a member? If "Yes," describe the process and complete lines 8b-8d, below.

All prospective members of the Focus on the Family ministry group are subject to an interview and review process by the diaconate and its representatives. Before being offered membership, candidates must sign our Statement of Faith, Certification Document, Morals Policy, and other related documents. They must agree doctrinally with the following statements:

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:21; 3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of individual churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

8b. If you have members, do your members have voting rights, rights to participate in religious functions, or other rights? If "Yes," describe the rights your members have.

Members of our congregation do not have "voting rights," as we do not define membership like other membership organizations. Please refer to Question 8a. However, our ministry personnel and congregation are encouraged to participate in the religious functions of Focus on the Family, and thereby enjoy the following benefits and responsibilities accordingly:

- Members are notified of monthly service times, devotional opportunities, and so on.
- Members receive a formal email about the monthly chapel service, including an order of service and information on hymns, guest pastor or speaker, etc.
- Monday prayer meetings also include details on upcoming ministry events for the week.
- Small group devotions/meetings are reserved only for members.
- Regular "town hall" meetings are conducted to keep members updated on ministry developments and decisions from the Board of Directors/elders.
- Weekly emails are sent to members with updates about Cabinet/diaconate discussions.
- Weekly emails are sent to members with updates on current ministry happenings and initiatives.

8c. May your members be associated with another denomination or church?

Yes. We believe that it is biblical for our members to associate with other churches since the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that true churches cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Much like many other evangelical churches encourage involvement in neighborhood small groups or Bible studies for the purposes of spiritual growth, accountability and so forth, so do we encourage our members to actively participate in Christian fellowship with a body of believers in their specific locality. Focus on the Family, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should oversee the church and its ministries (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4). We teach that elders are to lead as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22). The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:21; 3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of individual churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

8d. Are all of your members part of the same family?
No.

9. Do you conduct baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.?

During the Easter season, our members gather for a Maunday Thursday service. At this time the sacrament of Holy Communion is observed as a remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ and a commemoration of the Last Supper. This service is reserved only for members, their families, and guests attending the chapel service.

When it comes to other sacraments, observances and ceremonies, we believe it is biblical for our members to associate with other churches because the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that true churches cooperate with one another for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Focus on the Family encourages its members to celebrate baptisms, weddings and funerals with their associated churches.

10. Do you have a school for the religious instruction of the young?

Yes, we conduct programs and training in our religious beliefs with many different age groups. We also provide instructional materials for self-study geared toward young and old alike.

Historically, the Focus Leadership Institute (formerly known as Focus on the Family Institute), a specialized leadership training program, was launched in September of 1995, and was offered multiple times a year to selected young people who were simultaneously enrolled at an accredited academic institution. As they participated in classroom sessions, individual research, and internships under the mentorship of specialists in their area of study, a unique emphasis was placed upon the integration of foundational ministry principles to their academic disciplines and their future careers. A significant component of the program was a community learning environment where mentoring and accountability were stressed. In developing this endeavor, Focus on the Family relied on the input of university leaders from over 110 colleges and universities, as well as leaders from the business and government arenas. Participants were afforded opportunities to interact with renowned leaders and to complete an internship related to their future career field. The Institute also built a sustainable brand of online programming to serve constituents of all ages. Focus on the Family's *The Truth Project*, a DVD and curriculum-based Christian worldview seminar, was created out of course work that was originally presented at the Institute.

In addition, for 30 years, Focus on the Family has produced the *Adventures in Odyssey* instructional program. It has offered families hope, encouragement and important life lessons based on biblical truths. Intended especially for children ages 8 to 12, it is also applicable to all ages. The program reached an industry milestone in 2008, becoming the longest-running weekly drama with a consistent cast of characters. *Adventures in Odyssey*, in both daily and weekly versions, is now heard on over 4,050 radio facilities worldwide. The program features biblically-themed titles such as:

1. "The Shepherd and the Giant" - David and Goliath - "Heroes"
2. "A Prisoner for Christ" - the apostle Paul - "Mission:Accomplished"
3. "Elijah 1 & 2" - The prophet Elijah - "Mission:Accomplished"
4. "Bernard & Joseph 1 & 2" - story about Joseph - "Just in Time"
5. "Back to Bethlehem 1,2 & 3" - Jesus' birth - "Other Times, Other Places"
6. "The Star 1 & 2" - The wise men meet Jesus - "At Home and Abroad"
7. "Moses, the Passover 1 & 2" - Moses - "Meanwhile, In Another Part of Town"
8. "An Adventure in Bethany 1 & 2" - Lazarus Story - "Flights of Imagination"
9. "Count It All Joy" - find joy in every situation - "A Time of Discovery"
10. "Pilgrim's Progress Revisited 1 & 2" - "Passport to Adventure"
11. "Siege at Jericho" - Joshua at the battle of Jericho - "The Changing Times"
12. "St. Paul, the Man From Tarsus" - Apostle Paul - "Twist and Turns"

11a. Do you have a minister or religious leader? If "Yes," describe this person's role and explain whether the minister or religious leader was ordained, commissioned, or licensed after a prescribed course of study.

Yes. We ascribe to a scriptural model whereby the church is led by a plurality of godly, biblically qualified, servant-leaders called elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2). The function of the elders is threefold. First, an elder should build and develop their own lives and families in the Lord (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Second, an elder is to feed, shepherd and pray for the flock of God (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:17-32; Acts 6:1-4). This involves teaching the truth, refuting error, and the administering discipline. Third, elders are to oversee and manage the entire ministry of the local church (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

Since we follow the model of an elder-led church, we do not believe our religious leaders need to be ordained, commissioned or licensed after a prescribed course of study. We believe our elders need to be biblically qualified servant-leaders as described in Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2.

Our President and CEO, James D. Daly, is also an elder in good standing. He is given the authority to oversee the leadership team at Focus on the Family, which we refer to as deacons or deaconesses. We teach that deacons and deaconesses serve the church in a variety of practical ways, being the hands and feet of the elders while providing leadership to the ministry partners of Focus on the Family (1 Timothy 3:13). Mr. Daly typically leads our weekly stand-up prayer meetings and also concludes our monthly chapel services with a prayer and a charge to the congregation.

In addition, our COO and a member of the diaconate, Ken Windebank, leads our monthly chapel services. Mr. Windebank attended seminary and is a former youth leader. We also have a seminary trained staff care chaplain, Ron Wilson, whose specific function is to minister to the personal needs of members.

11b. Do you have schools for the preparation of your ordained ministers or religious leaders?

No, since we believe our religious leaders do not need to be ordained, commissioned or licensed after a prescribed course of study. We do not find it necessary to have a school for the preparation of our elders.

Internal Revenue Service
May 31, 2016

Focus on the Family
EIN: 95-3188150

12. Is your minister or religious leader also one of your officers, directors, or trustees?

Yes, James D. Daly is our President and CEO. He is also a member of the Board of Directors, which is analogous to the board of elders of the church and which provides religious leadership to the organization, its members, and the public-at-large. He also serves as a representative of the elder board on the diaconate.

13. Do you ordain, commission, or license ministers or religious leaders? If "Yes," describe the requirements for ordination, commission, or licensure.

No. We ascribe to a scriptural model whereby the church is led by a plurality of godly, biblically qualified, servant-leaders called elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2). Since we follow the model of an elder-led church, we do not believe our religious leaders need to be ordained, commissioned or licensed after a prescribed course of study. We believe our elders need to be biblically qualified servant-leaders as described in Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2.

Members of the cabinet/diaconate are generally selected from the existing membership. They are identified, as needed, based on demonstrated qualities of leadership and spiritual maturity. Special consideration is given to the qualifications for deacons and deaconesses outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 1:7.

The Board of Directors/elder board is a self-perpetuating body, the membership of which is called by the existing group. An exhaustive process is employed to determine who is nominated to the elder board, again with a heavy emphasis on spiritual maturity and biblical qualifications as outlined in the New Testament, particularly the books of 1 Timothy and Titus. Existing members of the elder board also engage in concerted times of earnest prayer, both individually and as a group, before making a final determination about new members.

14. Are you part of a group of churches with similar beliefs and structures? If "Yes," explain. Include the name of the group of churches.

No, although Focus on the Family has informally associated with other true churches around the world for the presentation and propagation of the faith. These affiliate offices/churches are located in thirteen different countries. These countries, as well as others within the same regions, represent our mission field.

Each affiliate church embraces the same core belief that:

- All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).
- The formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- The Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11; 3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).
- The establishment and continuity of autonomous churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves with other believers (Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Ephesians 4:11-13).

15. Do you issue church charters? If "Yes," describe the requirements for issuing a charter.
No, we do not issue church charters. As stated above, we believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

Internal Revenue Service
May 31, 2016

Focus on the Family
EIN: 95-3188150

16. Did you pay a fee for a church charter? If "Yes," attach a copy of the charter.
No, we did not pay a fee and do not believe church membership can be purchased.

17. Do you have other information you believe should be considered regarding your status as a church? If "Yes", explain.

Yes, please see the attached listing of ministry programs that explains our mission field, how many people we reach through our ministry, among other related information.

The Ministries of Focus on the Family

There's more to Focus on the Family than meets the eye (or ear). Even those who listen regularly to our radio outreach ministry and have a fairly solid acquaintance with our purposes and philosophy might be surprised at the actual scope of our ministry activities and involvement. From humble and simple beginnings – a book on biblical parenting and child discipline and a 25-minute weekly broadcast which first aired in 1977 - Focus on the Family has grown and expanded over the years to include a wide array of inter-connected ministries under its umbrella. The following descriptions are intended to provide just a sample of the diversity of these ministries, programs, and outreaches:

Broadcast Ministries

Daily Focus on the Family Broadcast with Jim Daly
(www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio)

The daily Focus on the Family with Jim Daly radio program offers biblical, practical insights for families, with real help for marriage and parenting from families. Jim Daly and co-host John Fuller interview engaging guests, sharing stories, insights and some laughter, as well, in this 30-minute broadcast.

According to Nielsen measures the audience for this program is more than two million weekly - with a potential audience of 14 million weekly.

The vast radio network carrying the daily Focus on the Family (FOF) broadcast continues to expand in the number of facilities and programs offered - heard on nearly 2,300 facilities (including terrestrial stations, their translators and satellite radio) in North America, with an estimated 700 outlets via streaming stations and other internet channels.

This daily broadcast is offered as a resource on audio CD, Podcast, MP3, online streaming audio, and via a mobile app. The daily Focus on the Family program is also available on Salem Communication's OnePlace.com website, TuneIn and Stitcher along with other web locations.

Focus on the Family Commentary Broadcast

This 90-second practical and inspirational feature hosted by Focus on the Family President Jim Daly is now carried every day by more than 200 "general market" (non-religious) radio facilities.

Families around the world are finding the feature meeting needs in their lives, as well. Not only is the English language commentary heard in dozens of global cities such as Singapore and Johannesburg, it is also translated into various languages and airs in Argentina, Indonesia, mainland China, and Slovakia. The broadcast is carried every day across the world from over 400 stations.

Focus on the Family Minute (FOFM) Broadcast

This 60-second radio feature spotlights excerpts from the daily Focus on the Family broadcast. The "Minute" presents a snapshot of family help and encouragement while also serving as an introduction for new listeners to the daily program. FOFM now airs on an estimated total 1,800 outlets in the United States and around the world.

Focus on the Family Weekend (Christian and General Market)

Airing on over 1,200 facilities nationwide, 130 facilities in Canada, plus 23 outlets across the world, this weekly hour-long broadcast provides a variety of advice and encouragement about marriage, parenting, health, finances and entertainment. Designed for busy families, this replay of the week's best broadcasts is hosted by Jim Daly.

Adventures In Odyssey Broadcast

For more than 25 years, Adventures in Odyssey has offered families hope, encouragement and important life lessons based on biblical truths. Intended especially for children ages 8 to 12, it is also applicable to all ages. The program reached an industry milestone in 2008, becoming the longest-running weekly drama with a consistent cast of characters! Adventures in Odyssey, in both daily and weekly versions, is now heard on almost 1,000 radio facilities worldwide. The program is also available online at www.whitsend.org and on Salem Communication's OnePlace.com website.

Plugged In Broadcast

Currently airing on more than 1,000 radio facilities and hosted by media expert Bob Walizewski, Plugged In's daily one-minute broadcast evaluates tv shows, music, DVDs, video games, and theatrical movie releases each week. Augmented by a variety of live interview opportunities, this feature remains very popular with stations and audiences.

Focus on the Family Radio Theatre Broadcast

Focus on the Family Radio Theatre is heard on 559 facilities each week. Radio Theatre features classic stories brought to life with motion-picture-quality cast and sound. Radio Theatre recently received the prestigious Peabody Award for its production of "Bonhoeffer: The Cost of Freedom" and "Oliver Twist." In addition to the regular placement of the program, Radio Theatre productions are occasionally offered as radio specials and carried by an additional network of interested outlets.

Boundless Show

This hour-long podcast hosted by Lisa Anderson brings a lively discussion, with poignant information and challenging guests, to Christian young adults. The show is now broadcast on over 359 radio stations each week in the U.S.

Enfoque a la Familia Broadcast

Enfoque a la Familia's mission is to reach the Hispanic community of the United States with the truth of the Gospel through strengthening and upholding the Hispanic family. The Enfoque a la Familia radio broadcast is currently airing on about 98 facilities throughout the U.S. and on approximately 366 facilities outside the U.S.

Comentario de la Enfoque a la Familia Program

This 90-second Spanish-language feature that provides marriage and family advice is heard on 29 domestic and 344 international facilities.

Conectados Program

The Spanish-language version of the weekly Plugged In Movie Review feature is heard on 79 facilities in the United States and 156 facilities around the world.

Relationship Services

Each week brings thousands of contacts, via email, phone calls, letters and social media, each seeking a response to unique requests. This direct communication is a vital link to the people we desire to serve. We also moderate most of Focus on the Family Forums and Blogs, which occasionally provides opportunities to reach out to this community as well. Those who contact us are treated with dignity, care, and expertise. The many inquiries for information, advice, and encouragement are fielded and supported by a well-trained staff of 80, predominantly with earned degrees.

Counseling

Many of those who come to us require specialized care. Focus on the Family is increasingly called upon to assist those experiencing painful and often destructive situations. Potential suicides, cases of spouse abuse, and child molestation are not uncommon. These pleas receive a reply by phone on a one-to-one basis. Most contacts are prompted by our radio broadcasts, which touch off an avalanche of "pain mail" and cries for help. In addition to the radio broadcast, callers become aware of the counseling/consultation we offer through Focus on the Family websites, magazine articles, simulcasts and other ministry outreaches. Our staff of 16 state-licensed counselors, 4 support staff, and 3 chaplains, responds to the critical letters and calls too complex for a mail or email response. Beyond this free consultation, when appropriate, callers are referred to counselors in their geographical area who have been approved through a screening process for our National Referral Network. Focus on the Family does not provide a categorical "endorsement" of therapists on the referral network. No charge is made for consultation with the Focus on the Family counselor.

Online Ministries

Focus on the Family Website (www.FocusontheFamily.com)

The flagship website for Focus on the Family draws an average audience of about 1,335,000 unique visitors per month, providing our constituents with ready access to reliable, practical, time-tested advice on marriage, parenting, life challenges and more. Through online articles, blogs, broadcasts, podcasts, streaming audio/video and community forums

FocusontheFamily.com offers encouragement, inspiration and help for people of all ages.

Visitors can search all Focus on the Family's online content by topic, site or media type, finding the information they need whenever they need it.

Family Resources - Book Publishing

Focus on the Family partners with several Christian publishers to create and distribute products including character building fiction for children, marriage advice, parenting help, and inspirational books for men and women. More than half of these products are created by an in-house team of writers and editors, and are supported by literary contributions from talented authors.

Films and Videos

Focus on the Family began its first film production in 1986 and has continued producing new programs that have been translated in more than 20 languages. Focus on the Family continues to seek the widest possible audiences for its videos. The subject matter in Focus on the Family videos includes marriage and parenting advice, worldview curricula, and both animated and live action character building videos for children. All of our original videos are scripted and filmed with Christian audiences in mind, although they are often enjoyed by a broader audience.

Marriage Ministry (www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage)

While the very definition of marriage is debated, couples continue to face the challenge of building, strengthening and preserving thriving marriages. Our Marriage ministry is committed to inspiring the God-given desire within men and women for life-long, healthy marriages, equipping them to prepare a solid foundation for marriage, strengthen their marriage, save their marriage in crisis, and to raise hope-filled children who will shape our nation and future generations.

The Boundless Project (www.boundless.org)

Sponsored by Focus on the Family, Boundless is a ministry for those in the transitional years between high school graduation and parenthood. While research warns us of an inherent spiritual wanderlust during these years, Boundless offers young adults a consistent Christian community and motivation to remain firm in their faith, plugged into a local church body, and intentional about the pursuit of marriage and family. From college to career to relationships, Boundless offers a vibrant vision for young adults seeking to experience the abundant Christian life in the midst of discovery and change.

Focus on the Family's National Institute of Marriage (www.nationalmarrige.com)

This year, Focus on the Family's National Institute of Marriage has helped more than 1,000 couples strengthen their marriage and family through a variety of different programs. Over 500 couples were served in intensive marriage counseling programs through 3 day, 4 day and 6 day programs. An additional 662 couples through various marriage enrichment programs that were hosted at churches throughout the country and at the Focus on the Family's National Institute of Marriage Retreat Center in Branson, MO.

Sanctity of Human Life (www.beavoice.net)

Because the Sanctity of Human Life (SOHL) is one of the core commitments of Focus on the Family, the SOHL team promotes awareness of the value of each human life and equips its constituents to nurture and defend the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. Our primary initiatives are:

Adoption & Orphan Care Initiative: (www.icareaboutorphans.org)

Collaborate with partners on worldwide adoption and orphan care awareness campaigns, and coordinate efforts with government, church and adoption agency leaders to help find permanent adoptive families for the more than 100,000 legal orphans (children in foster care who are legally free for adoption awaiting permanency) in the U.S. Focus also provides post-adoption support to families, which includes training Christian therapists to help adoptive families.

Option Ultrasound (www.heartlink.org/oupdirectors.cfm)

Provide grants for ultrasound machines or sonography training to qualified Pregnancy Medical Clinics (PMCs) in high abortion communities, equipping them to offer limited obstetrical ultrasound services under the supervision of a licensed physician. This year we placed 11 ultrasound machines in PMCs, for a program total of 438.

Benevolent Resources (www.heartlink.org/directors/benevolentresources)

Provide through a benevolent program for pregnancy care organizations around the world \$500 yearly per organization of educational resources for women facing unexpected pregnancies.

Parenting (www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting)

It's impossible to estimate the number of letters we've received over the years from parents thanking Focus on the Family for helping them raise their children. Our ministry has long been known for its parenting resources, and the Parents ministry team forges into the 21st century helping parents guide their families through difficult times, raise healthy and resilient children, and pass on a thriving faith to those children.

Pluggedin.com (www.pluggedin.com)

Now reaching more than 1.3 million visits per month (15.6M annually), this Focus website posts timely reviews of what's playing in theaters each week (with an ongoing archive), television programming, popular CDs and video games. These reviews focus on the messages being conveyed, both positively and negatively. The pluggedin.com website also tackles many of the most popular questions being asked by our readership as well as offering practical advice about becoming more discerning regarding today's media.

PluggedIn produces an entertainment podcast each week and, in the spirit of hearing back from those we are trying to minister to, PluggedIn has launched its own blog. Practical entertainment help and advice can be found in the "Family Room" section of the website. In addition, the Plugged In radio features are currently airing on over 1,000 radio stations, heard each day by an audience in excess of 9 million. A video version of the same feature airs on a number of cable outlets weekly. Many families find our smartphone app a valuable resource, especially since they are able to research their entertainment choices at the moment of decision-making.

Thriving Family (www.thrivingfamily.com/)

The Media Publishing Group launched Thriving Family, a full-size, newsstand-worthy parenting, marriage, and family magazine in the fall of 2009 and mails 225,000 copies 6 times per year of this 60-page publication. The purpose of Thriving Family is to provide and reinforce Focus on

the Family's core marriage and parenting message to the bull's-eye audience on a regular basis and to inspire and equip families. A complementary website and digital edition were also created to provide additional access and reinforcement of the Thriving Family vision.

Focus on the Family Clubhouse Magazine (www.clubhousemagazine.com)

In serving nearly 65,000 of our intermediate readers, ages eight to twelve, Focus on the Family Clubhouse presents a fun mix of contemporary and classic fiction, personality stories, fact articles, quizzes, devotionals, crafts and games all from a Christian perspective that help parents show kids a better understanding of their world and God's Word.

Focus on the Family Clubhouse, Jr. Magazine (www.clubhousemagazine.com/club_jr)

This colorful, high-quality magazine, geared for ages three to seven, contains simple stories, crafts, Bible stories, poems, and puzzles designed to delight the 50,000 families who receive it. An emphasis on Christian values and cognitive development makes this an ideal resource for families with pre-readers and early readers.

Children (www.whitsend.org)

Focus on the Family meets the needs of kids of all ages while providing a safe place to grow in their faith. The sites for younger kids provide fun articles, faith-building stories, recipes, activity suggestions, poems, movie reviews and games.

Youth Outreach (www.trueu.org)

The Youth Outreach department seeks to equip parents, youth leaders/ministers, and youth (ages 4-12) with the essential tools that will enable them to help youth understand, navigate, and impact the culture in which they live. We do this by helping parents and others shape the identity, foundations, and perspective with entertaining and Biblically-based content that can involve the whole family.

Physicians Resource Council

Over thirty U.S. and Canadian physicians representing diverse medical specialties serve as volunteers on the Focus on the Family Physicians Resource Council (PRC). The PRC works closely with our Medical Review department staff, and functions in a supportive, advisory capacity by providing our ministry with expert counsel regarding medical and health-related issues that relate to our broadcasts, publications, films, and other media.

Welcome Center / Bookstore / Whit's End

Approximately 240,000 people visit Focus on the Family's Welcome Center every year, where they can explore our ground level, which features a 10,000 square foot Bookstore and Gift Shop filled with relevant and compelling resources and wholesome entertainment; the Solid Grounds Coffee Shop; the G. Harvey Gallery with an impressive display of art created especially for Focus on the Family; various ministry-related displays; and our spacious theater, which is host to a video on the history and mission of Focus on the Family. Our lower level is home to Whit's End Soda Shoppe, a turn-of-the-century soda fountain inspired by the popular radio drama series Adventures in Odyssey (AIO); Kid's Discovery Emporium, featuring the widely popular three-story A-Bend-A-Go slide; video caves; climbing gym; touch-screen coloring books; a B-17

aircraft based on the Last Chance Detectives video drama series; hand puppets and AIO costumes for extemporaneous play-acting on a children's theatrical stage; KYDS Radio Station for personally recording an AIO Radio Drama and leaving with a souvenir CD; a rich in color toddler room with close-to-the-floor climbing props (ie. boat, tunnel, animals); and a hands-on Foley Museum and Narnia Room, complete with a walk-through wardrobe. Information is available at the Welcome Center regarding our Daily Guided Tours of the Administration Building, including the Gallery where our Radio Broadcasts are recorded.

Odyssey Adventure Club (www.oaclub.org)

For more than 25 years, parents and children have enjoyed Focus on the Family's Adventures in Odyssey audio drama. Now, families can join the new Odyssey Adventure Club to access the entire library of episodes and receive daily devotions and other benefits aimed at helping children put their faith in action.

Children today have so many media choices, and not all of them are positive. Through the Odyssey Adventure Club, parents can trust their kids will receive engaging, faith-building material - all in a safe Internet environment. We want to provide fans with interactive content that builds on the lessons they've received through Odyssey and helps them grow in their walk with Jesus.

Club membership includes access to the show's entire library and daily devotions. Members also receive exclusive new monthly episodes and video documentaries that give a behind-the-scenes look into the production of these stories. Other club features include hands-on activities, crafts and articles, as well as special discounts.

The club will also raise kids' awareness to needs around the world by highlighting partner organizations and their outreach efforts, including Christian Veterinary Mission, Operation Christmas Child and Compassion International.

We have welcomed members from more than 40 countries and territories around the world. We have also added dozens of Spanish-language audio dramas to our growing library.

The Importance of Social Responsibility

Now more than ever, we at Focus on the Family recognize the need to make our voices heard in the public square. Protecting life, marriage and religious liberties are among the front burner issues that impact the family. Our Government and Public Policy outreach addresses these issues and more through a number of venues. In-house experts grapple with contemporary social issues and then produce educational and motivational resources for the Focus audience.

Day of Dialogue (www.dayofdialogue.com)

This website provides information and resources for a student-led, free speech initiative called "Day of Dialogue". Among other things, it equips Christian students to express their Biblical viewpoint in a loving and grace-filled way on current-day issues including bullying, relationships and sexuality.

TrueTolerance (www.TrueTolerance.org)

This website is for parents and families who are concerned about what their schools are teaching about sensitive topics, including bullying and sexuality. The website offers information and tips for parents, such as how to approach school officials with concerns. It also provides a mechanism for them to email packets of information to their school officials outlining information on parental rights and families' religious freedoms.

Bring Your Bible to School Day (www.bringyourbible.org)

This is a nationwide, religious-freedom initiative for public school students. Held every October, it's an annual event sponsored by Focus on the Family. On this day, students across the nation celebrate religious freedom and use their free-speech rights to initiate voluntary conversations about God's love with their friends. The initiative empowers students to understand their freedoms to express their personal beliefs in the truth of God's Word-and to do so in a respectful way that demonstrates the love of Christ. Participation is voluntary and student directed - meaning it's completely up to the students, Christian clubs and youth groups to access resources and then initiate the student activities at their school. An estimated 155,000 students from all 50 states participated this year.

Focus on the Family's Citizen Magazine (www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/citizen-magazine/page/1)

Citizen magazine is a 32-page, four-color, monthly newsmagazine issued 10 times a year. Citizen offers its readers news and analysis on cultural, political and public policy issues that dominate the headlines or are not seen in the mainstream media - all from a biblical worldview. Citizen seeks to inspire and equip men and women to live out biblical citizenship within their spheres of influence - whether that's in the boardroom, school room or the family room.

State Family Policy Councils (www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/how-to-get-involved/state-policy-councils/state-policy-groups)

Since 1988, business and community leaders from across the nation have formed state-level organizations to invest in the future of America's families. Each Family Policy Council conducts policy analysis, promotes responsible and informed citizenship, facilitates strategic leadership involvement, and influences public opinion. Many of these councils also perform community and statewide work to foster a movement to affirm families. These councils are independent entities with no corporate or financial relationship to each other or to Focus on the Family. However, they have a uniform purpose: serving as a voice for the family and assisting family advocates who aim to recapture the moral and intellectual high ground in the public arena.

Social Issues Analysis (www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues)

This website serves to bring timely, critical analysis to bear on the most important cultural and policy issues of the day. Written and edited by some of the country's most knowledgeable family advocates, the resources featured here are designed to educate and energize concerned citizens within religious, political, educational and activist spheres working to apply Christian principles to the struggles that face our nation.

Evangelism

"Focus on the Family" Newspaper Column

Each week millions of readers search for the answers to questions about family life. The "Focus on the Family" column features answers to family-related questions, fielded by Focus on the Family President Jim Daly with Focus on the Family experts. The column appears weekly in over 120 newspapers.

Christian Worldview Ministry (www.thetruthproject.org)

At Focus we believe that every aspect of our lives - the way we manage our families, carry out our work, enjoy our free time, and relate to others - stems from our understanding of who God is and who we are in Him. The goal of the Christian Worldview team is to awaken our constituents to God's Truth, character, design, and purpose for all of life by creating a curriculum for small group study, training facilitators, and providing support for those teaching these vital concepts and serving as impact partners in our society.

Social Media

Focus on the Family social media efforts span across multiple channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, blogs, etc. Our combined social footprint includes over 5.5 million fans and followers. The goal of this aspect of ministry is to bring our message/help/services to the places/sites where families are today, instead of waiting for them to come to our websites. We do this by offering small excerpts of our content, contests, give aways, tips, links and free downloads. We also have a pro-active listening aspect of our social media efforts, where we listen in the social media space (not just our pages) for opportunities to provide help, resources & counseling to families in need of our support.

Thriving Pastor Connection weekly e-mail (www.ThrivingPastor.org)

Designed with an emphasis on Soul Care, the goal of Thriving Pastor Connection is to offer weekly support and encouragement to pastors and church leaders as they attempt to find balance and health in their spiritual, emotional and physical lives.

Pastor to Pastor CD Audio Series

This resource is especially designed to meet the specific needs of busy pastors and church leaders. Pastor to Pastor is an extensive audio library featuring interviews with leading pastors and Christian leaders on important topics for those in ministry. Hosted by Rev. H. B. London, Jr., a respected senior pastor for over 30 years, numerous guests offer their solid biblical insights on topics such as finances, parenting stages, burnout, suffering, conflict, personal devotions and restoration. One hundred two editions have been produced since 1992 and are now available online for listening or downloading.

Thriving Pastor (www.ThrivingPastor.org)

The website was created to come alongside pastors as they endeavor to serve the Lord in these most difficult days. The mission is to facilitate spiritual, emotional and physical health in the life of the pastor and to provide resources and services that would offer support and encouragement to the pastor's personal life, family and ministry.

Pastoral Ministries (www.ThrivingPastor.org)

Relevant materials and referrals aid the Church Care and the Counseling departments in facilitating the spiritual renewal of ministers and their families. Time, financial, and relational pressures that are unique to ministry in today's fast-paced culture are placing pastors' homes under attack as never before. As a means of providing insight and encouragement to counteract these destructive influences, several resources and services are offered. Among these are Thriving Pastor Connection, a weekly e-mail, coaching events for pastors, and our toll-free Pastoral Care Line, administered by our Counseling Department, which provides a listening ear, referrals and advice to pastoral family members in crisis. Church Care also continues to spearhead the effort to promote the observance of Clergy Appreciation Month each October. The In House Ministry of Concern provides support for Focus on the Family employees at times of death, illness and other personal issues. The Pastoral Care Online Directory offers a list of care giving ministries, books, tapes, videos and other resources. The Pastors Advocate Series of booklets helps congregations better understand and care for their pastoral families.

The Shepherd's Covenant

Pastors are increasingly facing a crisis of integrity, righteousness and credibility. Many need to regain their focus and to recommit themselves to a lifestyle pleasing to the Lord, their families and congregations. To that end we offer a complimentary copy of The Shepherd's Covenant, a simple commitment by spiritual leaders to aspire to a new level of holiness and accountability based on the acronym G.R.A.C.E. (Genuine accountability, Right relationships, A servant's heart, Constant safeguards, Embracing God intimately). A weekly e-newsletter is included.

Benevolence

Funding from our annual budget helps to provide tangible support to those in need, primarily through distribution of various resources by our Relationship Services, Counseling, Thriving Pastor and Chaplaincy ministries.

International Outreach

The reach of Focus on the Family now extends to over 59 countries. Focus broadcasts can be heard from over 3,200 facilities from Vancouver to Buenos Aires to Finland, from South Africa to Melbourne to China. The distribution of print, audio, and video resources enhances our international family-strengthening outreach.

Associate Offices

Through Focus on the Family's Partner offices the international outreach of the ministry continues to expand. These independent entities, founded and staffed by over 200 nationals, are working to bring a message of hope to their countries. We now have Focus International Associate offices in 13 countries: Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and Taiwan.

We also have partnered with various like-minded ministry partner organizations in the above mentioned countries and regions to further expand our reach by offering our resources. For more information on our global efforts, please visit focusonthefamily.com and look for the globe.

International Resources

An increasing number of Focus on the Family print and video resources are finding their way into homes all over the globe. Our resources have been translated into over 37 different languages, including Afrikaans, Japanese, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Italian.

Radio Outreach

We have approximately 3,200 facilities reaching a global audience in more than 59 countries. We broadcast in 28 languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, English, Finnish, French, German, Hawa, Hinki, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Xhosa and Zulu.

Aventuras En Odisea

Launched in 2014, this Spanish broadcast mimics the English Adventures in Odyssey broadcast. It offers families hope, encouragement and important life lessons based on biblical truths especially to children ages 8-12, but also applicable to all ages. It is heard on 180 facilities in the United States and around the world.

Executive Leadership Certification Document

Name:

Focus on the Family has a compelling interest in maintaining the Biblical foundation and moral integrity of our leadership. We have adopted a statement of faith, core beliefs and a moral policy. The ministry has taken a strong public position regarding righteous living. Focus on the Family has acknowledged and affirmed the significance of Biblical standards concerning the character and conduct qualifications for its leadership team (1 Timothy 3:1-13), including the avoidance of conduct which will bring criticism and condemnation to the body of Christ.

1. Do you agree with the statement of faith, core beliefs and moral policy of Focus on the Family? Yes No Yes, with reservations (Please explain your reservations)

2. Is there anything unresolved in your life that would contradict the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13? Yes No (If yes, please explain)

3. As a leader at Focus on the Family do you believe you can guide those who will be under your authority to live their lives in a way that will not bring criticism and condemnation to the body of Christ? Yes No (If no, please explain)

By signing this document, I certify that I have read and understand my responsibilities as a leader at Focus on the Family. I also certify that I have answered all of the above questions honestly.

Name

Date

Focus on the Family has closely examined your life and testimony and we believe you are qualified to serve as a leader. For those who serve well as leaders gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

CEO – Jim Daly

Date

MORAL POLICY - (Revised: 10/30/15)

Forms referenced in this policy: Employee Notice of Divorce Form; Employee Notice of Separation Form

Searchable Keywords related to this policy: Behavior, principles, discipline, expectations

Other related information: None

POLICY STATEMENT

Focus on the Family has always advocated and adhered to the highest standards of ethical and moral conduct, as reflected in its mission statement:

To cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible by nurturing and defending families worldwide.

Focus on the Family has a compelling interest in maintaining the biblical foundation and moral integrity of the ministry. Accordingly, it has adopted a Statement of Faith, Six Pillars, and the Campaign for Righteousness. It has also taken strong public positions regarding righteous living and moral behavior. In doing so, Focus on the Family has acknowledged and affirmed the significance of biblical standards concerning the character and conduct qualifications for its employees (1 Timothy 3:1-13), including the avoidance of conduct which will bring criticism and condemnation to the body of Christ. As 1 Thessalonians 5:22 states, "Avoid every kind of evil."

As an employee of Focus on the Family, you have taken upon yourself the fearful and solemn prerogative of assisting the ministry to instruct others in matters of morality and family life. In so doing, each employee becomes accountable to a higher standard of conduct and fidelity than is required by most employers. As James writes in James 3:1, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly." In addition, Paul tells Timothy in Timothy 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." The credibility of the ministry and the viability of the message of Focus on the Family are dependent upon the conformability of each employee to the behaviors and principles we proclaim.

Moreover, ECFA's *Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship* states, "In several of his letters, the Apostle Paul stresses the importance of being beyond reproach and behaving in such a way as to avoid even the appearance of wrong-doing. He tells us that we need to be circumspect to those outside the Church. The reason Paul most often gives is that we must not give Satan any opportunity to destroy the reputation of Christ. Arguably, and in an eternal sense, it may be true that the business of ministries and churches is of concern to God and not to others judging from the outside. However, Scripture is also very clear about our need to be open, honest, and above reproach as we wrestle with the issues of life before Christ's return. As the Apostle Paul said, "For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men. (2 Corinthians 8:21)."

As an employee of Focus on the Family, you are a representative of the ministry in both your work life and your private life. Consequently, you must always be sensitive to how others see you from a biblical, spiritual, and ethical point of view – twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Titus 2:7-8 says, "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because

they have nothing bad to say about us." Each employee must live a life demonstrating a committed relationship with God and a shared belief in biblical standards and the principles that guide the ministry's work. Employee behavior which falls short compromises the ministry's message and will not be tolerated. Proverbs 25:26 say, "Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked." Thus every employee, in every position, is required to abide by the moral behavior standards set forth in this policy.

MORAL BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

Any act which is inconsistent with biblical standards of moral conduct constitutes immoral behavior. Acts of immorality are inconsistent with the behavior required of employees, and this is true whether the activity occurs on or off the job. If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular activity, an employee should bring the question to the attention of his or her supervisor, who will seek clarification and guidance as necessary from the Department of Ministry Values and Human Resources. Examples of immoral behavior include, but are not limited to, sexual relationships outside of marriage¹, non-biblical divorce², homosexual acts³, pornography⁴, transgender identity or expression⁵, theft⁶, lying⁷, drunkenness, illegal or improper use of drugs (including the improper use of prescription medications and illegal substances), recreational drug use (including marijuana and similar psychoactive substances, even when it's legal)⁸, spouse or child abuse⁹, and unjustified acts of violence¹⁰, and the use of Abortifacients¹¹. Other behavior that violates biblical standards of moral conduct also constitutes an act of immorality.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION **IMPLEMENTATION**

Department heads and supervisors, with advice and guidance from Human Resources, will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy. Actions inconsistent with this Policy constitute grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

*There are certain positions, as noted in their job description that are classified as positions of authority. This is defined as employees who 1) serve in the office of Vice President or higher; 2) are required to maintain regular, high-level contact with donors or benefactors of Focus on the Family on behalf of the ministry; 3) represents Focus on the Family as a spokesperson; 4) makes regular appearances on behalf of Focus on the Family on public broadcasts; or 5) regularly writes columns or articles for Focus on the Family's publications. In these cases, consequences of moral policy failures (and all divorces) will be held to a higher standard.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Legal Separation

For the purposes of meeting the legal requirements of the Focus on the Family Health Plan and the COBRA regulations, an employee who has been granted a legal separation or divorce by the courts, should contact the Human Resources Benefits Department immediately. The Benefits Department is required by law to send legal notices to the employee's spouse based on the date the spouse loses eligibility in the health plan.

Divorce Notification

- A form has been designed to clarify the circumstances surrounding the employee's divorce.
- The employee will be asked to answer three questions regarding critical issues of the divorce.
- The employee must return the completed form to their Human Resources Representative when entering the divorce process.
- If both spouses are employees of Focus on the Family, each spouse will be required to complete and sign individual notification statements.

¹ Ex. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:18

² Mal. 2:16

³ Rom. 1:25-27

⁴ Matt 5:28

⁵ Gen. 1:27

⁶ Ex. 20:15

⁷ Pro. 12:22

⁸ Pro. 20:1; Eph. 5:18

⁹ Eph. 5:28-29; Col. 3:21

¹⁰ Pro. 15:15 and 3:31

¹¹ Psalm 139:13,15

Return to Employee Policy Table of Contents (Revision History: New per Board approval on 02/20/08. Revised on 02/25/09, 10/25/12, 02/20/14, 07/03/14, 6/30/15, 10/30/15.)

A MAN CALLED NORMAN I-II

Product Type: Broadcast

Most Recent

Air Date: 06-26-2014

Guests: Mike Adkins, Jim Daly, John Fuller

Transcript 1

Opening Voice Track:

John: As we begin our program today, let me ask a question of you. I wonder if you've ever felt all alone and unloved? Or if you felt rejected by friends or coworkers or perhaps even family members. Probably all of us, if we were honest with ourselves, would say, "Yes, I *have had* some of those feelings at some point in my life." But what if that situation lasted and lasted for *years* and you saw absolutely no way out?

Well, today we'll bring you a timeless message about friendship and hope and love, even in a seemingly hopeless situation. This is "FOF" with Focus president and author, Jim Daly. I'm John Fuller and we feature today, one of our all-time *favorite* programs. And we'll have a unique twist for you at the end.

Opening Wrap:

Jim: John, this is a great program. I think it's one of my all-time favorites, too uh ... here at FOF. But you talked about loneliness there. It made me think about people in nursing homes or rehabilitation centers, people who are suffering from the feeling of isolation, you know, whose family may have dwindled down now. They may be the last or the last one or two survivors of their family.

John: Hm.

Jim: And they rarely, if ever, have visitors, John. And today's program, "A Man Called Norman" is a classic.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: We first aired it I think in 1984, Mike Adkins, and what a great story. But it speaks directly to loneliness. And if you're in a situation where you're isolated and feeling alone, call us here at FOF. That is one of our trademarks. We want to be there as a friend for you. You can call our counseling department or simply call and uh ... talk with us about where you're at, what's happening in your life. We want to put an arm around you. So, do ... do call us.

And uh ... again, today's program is a classic, one of the most popular ever aired at FOF.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: And uh ... when it aired, I think the phones, John, just rang off the hook. I think uh ... we moved over 35,000 CDs and cassettes over the years that we've aired this program.

John: I'm sure this is in the library of many who are listening today.

Jim: John, it touches people. That's why I like it so much and why it's so profound. I'm always amazed by the response we hear back after it airs. And uh ... we hear stories from all around the world, literally of people who uh ... looked around, found a lonely person in their neighborhood and tried to reach out like Mike Adkins does in the story, "A Man Called Norman." And really, he just simply became the hands and feet of Jesus--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --to a crotchety old neighbor, who was really the ... the downcast, the ... you know, the black sheep of the neighborhood, I'm sure and showed him the love of Christ.

John: Hm.

Jim: And it's wonderful to hear how this man called Norman responded.

John: Hm. Just a little bit of background about Mike. He's an evangelist, a singer, a songwriter. He's traveled all over the world and he's recorded six music albums, including the best-seller called *Thank You for the Dove*. He's married to Carmel and they have three grown children and a number of

grandchildren. And now, here's Mike Adkins on today's "FOF."

Body:

Mike: We'd prayed about what house to buy and we bought a house. God led us to it, got us a *marvelous* deal on it. It's the kind of house I love. It was an old house that I could work on and fix up.
(Laughter)

The first thing I did, I said, I'm gonna ... " I just see in my mind what this house was gonna look like when I got finished, didn't look that way now, but when I finished and I started with the lawn out in the front. There was an old tree that had rotted and fell down and I was gonna fill in that little hole in the ground and just ... there was still a little bit of a stump. I was gonna cut that out, fill the hole in, make it nice and smooth. I forgot, since we prayed, I forgot to check first to see who lived around me, because I trusted the Spirit of God, you know, that He would take care of those little things like that.

And ... and I want to tell you who lived right around the house I bought. On my left was a Catholic couple, their family and on my right ... I told you just backwards. On my right was a Catholic couple. On my left was a retired Methodist preacher. We became dear friends. He had great wisdom. He's dead now, but he was one of my dearest friends. And right across the street was a widow lady and next door to her is the one I want to tell you about. It was an old--we used to, when we was kids [*sic*], called 'em old haunted-looking houses.

Now, we had a fellow in our town that everybody used to laugh at--not everybody, you know what I mean, but generally. And the kids would throw snowballs at him in the winter time. He was weird. He was strange. You know, he was ... a lot of people call them your town jokes. They're in every town, I notice. This ... this fellow's name was Norman--old Norman. He was 6'2", thereabouts and he wore an old felt-looking hat that had so much dirt and oil in it you couldn't tell what it looked like originally, wore overalls that were just grease-soaked. He had old house shoes that he'd flop around town in, sometimes rubber galoshes. And they'd just flop when he walked up and down the street.

And he'd walk real fast up and down Main Street, like this, just ... and real fast. And then he'd stop and he'd talk to hisself [*sic*] (Sound of muttering) (Laughter) and ... and he ... and he'd do that all over Main Street. And people'd say, "Boy, he's weird, isn't he?" He owned the house across the street from me where the bushes were grown up and the old chocolate paint was fallin' off the house and the windows were so filthy. And I didn't even think anybody lived there at first.

And what ... that day that I was out there working on my tree stump, gonna fix the yard, in my coveralls,

barefoot, my wife and kids had gone uptown to the grocery store or something. I'm digging around the tree stump--gonna saw it out. (Sound of whistling) And I look over there. He walked out of that house and I saw that he lived there and I said, "Oh, no!" (Laughter)

I said, "Lord, that's weird Norman over there!" (Laughter) I said, "You had me buy the house across the street from weird Norman." (Laughter) I said, "Now, Lord, he's ... you know, I don't know exactly what's wrong. We hear a lot of rumors, but he ... I got two daughters and he ... sometimes I gotta be ... and he's *strange*! (Laughter) You know, I don't ... uh ... he might harm 'em I thought. And so, I ... I ... I watched him. He came down to come out to the sidewalk and go uptown or somewhere and I said (clearing throat), "Hi, Norman." He looked at me and he went, "Hm," and took off down the street.

A couple of days later I was out there working on the same tree stump. He came out, again. This time, he came out to work on his lawn mower out in the backyard. Something was wrong with it. It wouldn't run. He worked with it; he looked like he was getting disgusted. And I was watching him. I ... I thought, "Boy, he really *is* strange." And then he did something that I'll never forget for eternity.

He ... he stood up as tall as he could. He looked like the Incredible Hulk. He raised his arms; he looked at me. He glared at me and he ran from the back of his yard where I could just see him, out to the side of the house, down the side of the house, right at me, stopping at his sidewalk--praise, God. He ran at me and screamed at the top of his lungs. He went, "Argh-h-h." (Laughter) My heart was going, "Att-t-t-t." (Laughter)

I had a little tool in my hand my brother-in-law made in the shop class at the high school; he'd given it to me. And I remember saying, "Now, Lord, I know we're supposed to love everybody, but if he comes over here, Lord, I'm gonna defend myself." (Laughter) He went back to the lawn mower and he fooled around with it a little more, got angry some more, ran at me again, stopped at his sidewalk every time. Three times he did that; three times he stopped at his sidewalk.

Suddenly, the presence of the Lord settled all over me. I didn't expect it. I was surprised by it, but it settled all over me and when it did, it seemed that faith or ... or confidence or I don't know the right word, more than I normally possessed, it began to well up in me. And I did something that surprised even me. I got up, barefoot, coveralls, walked across that street and walked up to Norman in his backyard by his lawn mowers [sic]. I said (Clearing throat), "You having trouble with your lawn mower, Norman?" He looked at me and he said, "You having trouble with your lawn mower, Norman?" (Laughter)

I said, "I just said that." (Laughter) I said, "I'm not ... I'm not much of a lawn mower mechanic, Norman" and I heard him say, "I'm not much of a mechanic, Norman." (Laughter) I looked ... cleaned a spark plug, tightened a screw or two. I don't know anything about a lawn mower and I prayed and pulled that rope. And it ran like it'd been to the repair shop. It just hummed--just "hmm."

I got up and I looked him and he looked at that lawn mower. He looked at me; he looked at that lawn mower. And he did something. For the first time I saw ... and when he grinned real big, I saw a green and yellow tooth right here (Laughter) and I saw one over here and one here and one here. (Laughter) And those spectacles he had on looked like Coke bottles. They were thick and he had whiskers, had that old hat, but there he was grinning at me. And after that, every time he'd come out of the house and I'd say, "Hi Norman," he'd go, "Hello" and then, he'd take off down the street.

Men in my town said, "I wonder what ... reckon what's the matter with Norman?" Well, we was [sic] in the barber shop. You know that's where you find out things in town and (Laughter), especially our small town. And one fellow said, "I know what it is. Norman was hit by a Greyhound bus once, I heard." (Laughter) Another fellow said, "No, no, Fred, that's not it at all. What happened to Norman was, he was brilliant; he was a genius." Everybody in the barbershop was ... he said, "In fact, he was such a genius that his mind exploded one day." (Laughter)

I ... I kinda knew what he was talkin' about. I ... I had an algebra teacher once that, boy, he knew algebra. He ... I didn't, but he did. But he ... he'd come to class every day, as brainy as he was, he had his tie turned inside out every day. (Laughter) And I figured that was too much, you know (Laughter), and maybe that's what Norman's problem was and ... but God didn't care about all that. He said to me, "You," by get ... beginning to put a little seed of a seed of a seed way down here deep in my heart for the first time. He said, "Witness Jesus to him." "Well, okay, Lord, I'll ..."

One night after church ... it is tradition in our town to go to the Dairy Queen. (Laughter) Not so much anymore. We got a new McDonald's, too, but (Laughter) ... but anyway. In our town everybody used to go to the Dairy Queen after church. It was just what they did in those days. I was a trend and the scene was always the same. You know, whoever got out first--whoever had the 20-minute service, got there first, got their ice cream, sat down. Then the church that had the 25-minute service, they followed. And they got there next; they got their ice cream. They always waved at one another, "Hi, Bill." "Hi, John. Hi ... hi, Betty. How's your family?" "Fine." "How was church?" Uh ... oh, it always interested me. They always said the same thing. They'd say: "Oh, wonderful!" Never had heard anybody have a bad service.

And everybody would be waving and smilin' in the Dairy Queen and everybody'd be eating their ice cream. I've done it myself. I'm not saying anything about my neighbors I wouldn't say about myself; I was doing it myself. I was sitting there eating ice cream one night and I was smiling at everybody. Guess who walked in right in the middle of all that? Thank you. (Laughter)

He comes and gets his ice cream cone. He always sits there right in the same seat and every Christian in the place, especially Brother Mike, who travels around the country lifting up Jesus and singing adoration, I rushed over to him and gave him *The Four Spiritual Laws*--no. I did what everybody else did. I acted like I didn't see him. We gave him room. We didn't talk about him or to him about Jesus. I've always wondered why, now that I tell this story. I thought, "Well, I guess it's because if somebody saw me talking to him, they might think I'm as strange as he is."

Program Note:

John: Well, you're listening to Mike Adkins on today's "FOF," as he tells the story of "A Man Called Norman." And stay tuned, because we'll continue in just a moment. And if for whatever reason, you can't stay with us, then you can listen to the balance of this program online and order a CD of it, as well. Details at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. Let's go ahead and continue now with Mike Adkins on today's "FOF."

End of Program Note

Mike: And the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and said, "Quietly and don't make a show out of it, go over and tell him about Jesus." I said, "Carmel, pray for me. I'm gonna go talk to Norman." (Laughter) She's getting used to that kind of action and she's ... prayed. And I went over there and I sat down and ... real quick and I said, "Hi, Norman, do you remember who I am?" He said, "Do you remember who I am?" (Laughter)

I said, "Norman, listen. I'm your neighbor." He said, "I'm your neighbor." (Laughter) Had those same glasses on. He had dirt in his left ear, I could not believe it. He had an ice cream cone. He had ate part of it and had part in his whiskers. And he looked at me out of those eyes, out of those thick glasses. And I said, "Norman, do you ... do you know who Jesus is?" He said, "Do you know who Jesus is?" I said, because people were beginning to look, I said, "Norman, did you ever think about asking Jesus to come into your heart and your life?" He never repeated me. For the first time, he said, "I've given it serious consideration." I was shocked.

A couple of nights later the Lord said, "[The] '700 Club' is gonna have an extra special good program on tonight; invite Norman." "Hey, Norman. Hey, Norman, you want to come over tonight and watch television? '700 Club's' got a big ... come on." The Lord wanted to witness to him. He said, "Okay." He dressed up for us that day. He didn't take a bath. He didn't put on different clothes; he ... he put on an old string tie that somebody had given him, hung about like that and here he come [sic] across the street that night.

And he come [sic] up the steps and he came in the house. I've got a chair that is light-colored, gold, very light, velvet, kind of ... it's in my La-Z-Boy. I love it. I crank it out and you know (Sound of snore) go ... and I love it. It's right in front of the television. And the Lord said, "Get him there where he can see, 'cause he's got those glasses and he's ... I want to witness to him." And I ... I ... I said, "Norman, come on in. We're really glad to have you tonight at our house." [I] lied. (Laughter) I said, "Sit down over here in my chair." (Laughter)

He sat down in my chair and he watched "700 Club." He was witnessed to. My wife sit back here [sic] and I sit back here and we watched him watch the "700 Club." And after a while he got up and said, "Thank you very much" and he started out the door. And I went over and turned the light on for him. I said, "Watch the steps. Now, good night, Norman. Good night now; come back" and "Good night." Closed the door. I ran in the house, ran over to my chair. I looked at my chair; there wasn't a spot on it. It was like no one had ever sat there. It was clean. My wife sprayed a little bit of stuff in the air and the house smelled real good and we couldn't even tell he'd been there. (Laughter)

A few days later the Lord said, "Take him somewhere with you." I said, "Hey, Norman, you ever go to a Saint Louis baseball game—Busch Stadium, Saint Louis?" "Nope, like to." I said, "We'll go." Picked him up just a few days later. It was hot weather by this time. (Laughter)

He come [sic] out with one of the longest, wool, tweedy-looking winter coats on you've ever laid eyes on. It touched him about his shoes. And he's big, tall. He looked like the gray ghost when he come [sic] out of the house. (Laughter)

I said, "Norman, you're not gonna need that coat. It's hot, you know and we're gonna be outdoors. It ... there's no ... and it's ... the sun just ... and you'll persp ... and you ... leave ... " Why ... and he said, "Oh, no. I want to wear my ... I want to wear my ... " I said, "Norman, you know ... " "I want ... " "Get in the car, Norman." (Laughter) Turned the air conditioner wide open, headed up the interstate to Saint Louis.

He kept looking at that CB radio. Finally, I said, "Talk on that thing. Here, push that button and talk." I said, "Hey, men, breaker, we got a feller here who[s] never had a CB, never been around one before. He ... he mows lawns around our town for a living and he cleans ashes out of the furnaces in the wintertime." I said, "Let's give him a name. Give him a nickname." Somebody said, "Well, he'd be 'The Old Grass Cutter'." And he just ... and ... and I said, "Here, Old Grass Cutter, talk to him." He said, "Hello? (Laughter) This is Old Grass Cutter." And it ... he was fascinated.

He got to Saint Louis to the ball game. We parked in the parking area. And when we got out of the car, I figured out a plan. I said, "Norman, I'm not goin' in the ball game with you if you wear that stupid old coat." I was really afraid what somebody's think again. I said, "Norman, leave it in the car; just leave it here." He looked at me and he ... he studied me to see if I was really that serious and I was. And he ... we faced off for a while and finally, he began to take that old coat off. And when he took it off, I saw why he was wearing it. He had on two pair of dress pants that were split--both of them--all the way up the back. I said, "Put your coat back on, Norman. Here." (Laughter)

We went in the ball game. (Laughter) We turned that turnstile and walked in. And the first guy we saw was a little old guy with a T-top on. He had shorts on right here. He didn't have a muscle on his body, but he thought he did. He had hair that stood out like a Brillo pad. He had a transistor radio--great big--under this arm. He had a big cup of somethin' to drink in this arm and he was be-boppin' in the ball game. (Laughter) He ... he looked at ... he looked at Norman, never batted an eye; looked at me a little strange. (Laughter)

We got in. Norman didn't watch the game at all. He watched *the crowd*--30,000 people. He said, "Could I have a hot dog?" I gave him a hot dog and then another one and then 10 more. And I gave him soda and peanuts. I've never seen a machine eat like that. He just ate and ate and ate. (Laughter)

And the seventh inning got there and I'm ... I forgot it was the seventh inning. Everybody in the place stood up to stretch and I said, "Oh, yeah, Norman." By this time I had told him--'cause it was hot; he was perspiring--I said, "Just take your coat down and drape it over the seat. Sometime back around the third inning or so, he draped it over the seat and he was much more comfortable.

But now it was the seventh inning and we were standing all over the park. And I ... I said, "Stand up, Norman. Let's stretch." And we were just stretching away. (Laughter) And all of a sudden, I happened to glance behind me. The guy behind me was going ... (Laughter) I said, "Sit down, Norman; sit down; sit down." (Laughter)

It'd been a busy year, a busy year. I (Laughter), I ... I'd been working at the coal mine and uh ... and I was tired. And I'd been singin' in churches on the weekend[s] and I was tellin' the Lord about it, you know, because my vacation was coming up. And you know what the Lord told me? He said, "Why don't you take Norman with you on vacation?" (Laughter)

I said, "I'm goin' to Opryland, Lord. Norman at Opryland just ..." And He said ... I said, "Lord, I'm not gonna do it, now. I ... Sir, I ... I'm tired and ..." A couple of weeks later we was [sic] goin' down the highway to Opryland, Norman sitting in beside me, my wife and kids in the back.

I noticed something about him. He was beginning to be relaxed around people. He was beginning to be less nervous and he didn't talk to "hissself" as much as he had before. I got to Opryland and uh ... I didn't put him on the Wabash Cannonball, you know, 'cause he's about 62-years-old at the time and I was afraid he might have a heart problem over that, you know. So, I tried to pick out a ride he could handle and I found the bumper cars. I said, "Norman, did you ever ride in a ... ? "No." I said, "Here's how they work; push the pedal; turn the wheel and get and have a good time. Get in there." We got him in there. He sat down in that big old bumper car and looked at all them [sic] kiddies and all them [sic] girlfriends that wanted to hit their boyfriends with their car and all the mothers that wanted to hit the fathers with a car. And ... and he got everybody in the place caught over to one side. (Laughter)

They turned that ride on. He had the whole crowd pinned and he had his car sideways and had them jammed in over there and they were mad. (Laughter) And he was looking around, going ... and looking at me going, "Heh ..." And he couldn't figure it out and we began to laugh. And we were standing outside that place; tears were beginning to run in my eyes. I said, "Look, Carmel. Look at him. Look at Norman. He's got [sic] everyone caught over there." And the kids were (Sound of laughter).

And ... and finally, somebody got loose (Laughter) and the ride was about half over and they felt like they'd been cheated and they were in a hurry. They came all the way around that rink and they wanted to hit *somebody* before that ride was over and there sat Norman and they hit him full speed ahead. He went, "Oh."

And then, he really tried to get the thing goin' and here comes someone else and they were starting to get loose now in great numbers and one-by-one, they'd come around and they hit Norman. And the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me at Opryland and He said, "That's what they've been doing to Norman all his life. (Choking up) People [have] been hitting on him.

Closing Wrap:

John: Well, we hate to interrupt this presentation from Mike Adkins on today's edition of "FOF," but we're running out of time for today. And I'll encourage you to uh ... hear the entire presentation online and to join us next time for the conclusion, when we air part two of "A Man Called Norman."

Jim: John, what a powerful and clear message this is and uh ... what comes to my mind is the Good Samaritan. It's not exactly a fit, but uh ... in the same way, someone who is hurting. In the Good Samaritan case, it was the ... the physical wound and that Good Samaritan took care of the need.

In this case, it's deep emotional wounds and you know, I'm sitting here thinking, I may not know someone who's exactly Norman, but there are people in my orbit that remind me of Norman.

John: Hm.

Jim: And I've gotta do even more than what I do now to engage them and encourage them. And I'm taking it as a personal challenge today.

John: Well, I'm glad to hear that, Jim. I'm ... I'm reminded that ... that there are so many times I'm just busy.

Jim: Uh-hm.

John: I'm ... uh ... I ... I've got things to do. I don't want to take the time to engage, especially not *that person*, because they ... they have baggage. They drain me. I ... I just really would prefer not to and I think you're right. If ... if anything, the message here is, "Take time; be sensitive to the Spirit of God"--

Jim: Hm.

John: --as Mike refers to the Holy Spirit "and allow yourself to be used."

Jim: And you never know. What's vulnerable about this is, you never know how God will use you. Uh ... you know, there was no guarantee that it would turn into a *wonderful* story like we're hearing now. But you've gotta start. It's like the Lord's saying, that little ... that little mustard seed of faith, if we start with the Good Word and then, it blossoms into relationship. And then it changes a heart. And then, lo and behold, what's exciting is when somebody says, "I want what you have."

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: "How do you know Jesus like that?" *That's* the moment. I mean, that's what we're aiming for, is to really help people understand that. And I just admire Mike for takin' a risk with a man called Norman and uh ... investing in his life.

John: Uh-hm. Jim, we mentioned at the top of the program here, that we've heard uh ... from folks ... so many folks every time we've aired this presentation. And I think it was last time that we aired this message from Mike Adkins, we received a letter that just ties right into what you've been saying there.

Jim: Hm.

John: Uh ... I have it here and let me just read a portion of it. It said, "Dear Focus, my son is a lot like Norman. He's a bright, beautiful, autistic boy with no friends. And I pray every day for an understanding person that will love him when I'm no longer here to take care of him."

Jim: Hm.

John: "I can only hope my son will find compassion and understanding. *Please* continue to share stories like "A Man Called Norman," so my child has a chance to be loved for simply being a child of God."

Um ... I ... I thought that was a ... a deeply touching letter and a reminder again that we can't move so fast and we can't be so self-absorbed that we miss the people that need us.

Jim: Oh, you know, I'm ... it grips me right now. I'm just thinking of the love of that father. He's thinking of a time where he's not gonna be there--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --for his son. And uh ... that is the Body of Christ. That's our responsibility, to step up in the gap and to uh ... say, "Yes, I will be there for your son."

John: Hm.

Jim: And uh ... if we do more of that, John, I don't think there's anything that could stop the Body of Christ and the Lord working through us. So, man, it just ... it reinforces the need for us to be the hands

and feet of Jesus.

John: That letter uh ... that could've been written by me. I mean, I ... I have an autistic boy, who when I'm in my 60's, might leave the home. He might not.

Jim: Right.

John: Um ... I'm just deeply moved by and understand a little bit of that ... that parent's pain, thinking who's gonna ... who's gonna like my son? Who's ... who's gonna reach out to him?

Jim: Right, it's that lingering unknown for you, as to who is gonna stand in the gap, if you and Dena aren't there for your son.

John: Yeah.

Closing Voice Track:

John: Well, this has been a deeply touching presentation today and I hope it's made an impact on you, as it has on Jim and on me. And as he said at the start of the show, please get in touch with us here if you need to talk to one of our counselors. Just call during business hours and leave a message and we'll have a counselor call you back. And our number here is 800-232-6459; 800, the letter A and the word FAMILY. Or look for the phrase "Get Help" at the top of the page when you're at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio.

You know, our counselors here work with folks every day who really have nowhere else to turn. And they're at the end of their rope and in your day-to-day life, you might not get a chance to reach out to someone who's in dire straits, but you can do that when you support us with a generous contribution. As a way of saying thank you for assisting in that way, for your generous gift of any amount, we'll send a CD copy of this message. It's one of our most popular programs ever and you can listen to that again or pass it along to a friend or maybe donate it to your church library. Again, our number is 800-A-FAMILY; 800-232-6459. And online we're at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio.

Our program was provided by FOF and on behalf of Jim Daly and the entire team here, thanks for listening in. I'm John Fuller, inviting you back next time, when we'll conclude Norman's story and get an update from Mike Adkins and once again, turn our hearts toward home.

Transcript 2

Opening Voice Track:

Recap:

Mike: He looked at me out of those eyes, out of those thick glasses. And I said, "Norman, do you know who Jesus is?" He said, "Do you know who Jesus is?" I said, 'cause people were beginning to look, I said, "Norman, did you ever think about asking Jesus to come into your heart and your life?" He never repeated me. For the first time, he said, "I've given it serious consideration."

End of Recap

John: Well, that scene in an ice cream shop was just the beginning of a 29-year friendship between our speaker today, Mike Adkins and a man called "Norman," a man who the Lord had asked Mike to befriend. On today's edition of "FOF" with our president and author, Jim Daly, we'll hear the lessons that Mike Adkins learned. And uh ... these are lessons that will benefit each and every one of us.

Opening Wrap:

Jim: John, I've always loved this message because it's a motivator. It motivates us to act, not simply to just read our Bibles and pray, which are very important, but to actually *do*.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: And I think the story of "A Man Called Norman," it's profound in so many different ways. Uh ... the first is the fact that God loves Norman.

John: Hm.

Jim: And even though he's not perhaps as sharp as everyone else and he has other issues, uh ... God sent Mike Adkins as his neighbor to befriend him--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --and to learn more about Norman and to care for Norman. And it's a beautiful story, I think that could come right out of the Scriptures for us today if they were still being written--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --and to illustrate the beauty of brotherly love, one for another. And that really captures it, doesn't it?

John: It does and I really like the way that God worked on Norman and *Mike*, too. I mean, Norman had to be pulled out of ... of a life of--

Jim: Abuse, yeah--

John: --outcast and yes. Uh ... and ... and Mike had things that *he* had to wrestle with and God spoke to both of them and *through* both of them to uh ... many, many people. And it really is an amazing testimony of God doing remarkable things.

Jim: And last time, we even heard Mike talk about the Lord laying on his heart to invite Norman on his family vacation. Now I don't know about you, John, but if I had kind of a ... a strange neighbor and I felt the Lord saying to me, "Take Norman on your family vacation," first of all, I'd have to get through that myself. Then Jean and I would (Chuckling) have to--

John: I ... I'd have 101--

Jim: --and Jean ... (Chuckling)

John: --reasons not to do this.

Jim: And again, it just is a great testimony to Mike's faithfulness and he did it and look at the beautiful bouquet that Norman became--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --because of Mike's faithfulness.

John: Well, let me just quickly introduce Mike Adkins for those who weren't with us last time or haven't heard the previous airings of this presentation. He was a federal coal mine inspector, until God led him into a full-time ministry of evangelism and singing. And he's got a number of Gospel music albums and lives now in West Frankfurt, Illinois with his wife, Carmel. And uh ... after we hear this portion of Mike's message, we're going to do something, Jim, a little different. We're gonna give him a call and get an *update* about what God's been doing in Mike's life and ... and I know he'll have a story. He always--

Jim: Yes, he does.

John: --has a story to share.

Jim: He's a great storyteller.

John: Indeed and let's go ahead and let our listeners hear. We're gonna roll back just a little bit, get a recap from the last time. And uh ... with that, here's "A Man Called Norman" on today's "FOF."

Body:

Mike A.: He walked out of that house and I saw that he lived there and I said, "Oh, no!" (Laughter) I said, "Lord, that's weird Norman over there!" (Laughter) I said, "You had me buy the house across the street from weird Norman." (Laughter)

This time he came out to work on his lawn mower out in the backyard. Suddenly the presence of the Lord settled all over me. I didn't expect it. I was surprised by it, but it settled all over me and when it did, it seemed that faith or ... or confidence or I don't know the right word, more than I normally possessed, it began to well up in me and I did something that surprised even me.

I got up, barefoot, coveralls, walked across that street and walked up to Norman in his backyard by his lawn mowers [*sic*]. I said (Clearing throat), "You havin' trouble with your lawn mower, Norman?" He looked at me and he said, "You havin' trouble with your lawn mower, Norman?" (Laughter)

I said, "I'm ... I'm not much of a lawn mower mechanic, Norman" and I heard him say, "I'm not much of a mechanic, Norman," as I looked at him. (Laughter) I cleaned a spark plug, tightened a screw or two. I don't know anything about a lawn mower. And I prayed and pulled that rope and it ran like it'd been to the repair shop. It just hummed--just "hm." I got up and I looked at him and he looked at that lawn mower and he looked at me and he looked at that lawn mower and he did something. For the first time I saw ... when he grinned real big, I saw a green and yellow tooth right here. (Laughter) And I saw one over here and one here and one here. (Laughter)

It'd been a busy year, busy year. I ... (Laughter) I'd been workin' at the coal mine and ... and I was tired and I'd been singing in churches on the weekend[s] and I was telling the Lord about it, you know, 'cause my vacation was comin' up. And you know what the Lord told me? He said, "Why don't you take Norman with you on vacation?" (Laughter)

I said, "I'm goin' to Opryland, Lord. Norman at Opryland just ..." And He said ... I said, "Lord, I'm not gonna do it, now. Sir, I ... I'm tired and ..." A couple of weeks later we was [sic] going down the highway to Opryland (Laughter), Norman sitting in beside me, my wife and kids in the back.

We got to Opryland I didn't put him on the Wabash Cannonball, you know, because he's about 62-years-old at the time and I was afraid he might have a heart problem over that, you know. So, I tried to pick out a ride he could handle and I found the bumper cars. We got him in there. He sat down in that big old bumper car and he got everybody in the place caught over to one side. (Laughter)

They turned that ride on. He had the whole crowd pinned and he had his car sideways and had 'em jammed in over there and they were mad. (Laughter) And he was lookin' around goin' ... and lookin' at me goin', "Heh." And he couldn't figure it out. And we began to laugh and we were standin' outside that place, tears began to run in my eyes. I said, "Look Carmel. Look at him, Norman, he's got everyone caught over there." And the kids went, "Uh-ha."

And ... and finally somebody got loose. And the ride was about half over and they felt like they had been cheated and they were in a hurry. They came all the way around that rink and they wanted to hit somebody before that ride was over and there sat Norman. And they hit him full speed ahead. He went, "Oh." And then he really tried to get that thing going. And here comes someone else and they were starting to get loose now in great numbers and one-by-one, they'd come around and they'd hit Norman.

And the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me at Opryland and He said, "That's what they've been doin' to Norman all his life. People [have] been hittin' on him. They've been hittin' on him.

I had taken Norman an old suit of mine that I didn't wear any more. God brought that to my attention. And I ... I went over and looked in his closet and I couldn't believe my eyes: old shoes of every description you can imagine, old suits, sweaters that hung this way, all kinds of ties--bolos, sparkly ties, big wide ties, little ties--nothing that anyone would want to wear.

I said, "God, give me an opportunity to ... bless me some way, Lord." And a revival to sing at came in and I know they ... they gave me an offering at the end of the revival. And the Lord said, "Buy Norman a suit." I went downtown. I bought one of the nicest suits I could find. I made sure it cost at least more than any suit I owned in my wardrobe. And I went to get him and take him and he picked it out. He liked it. It was kind of dark blue. He had good taste. It had a little stitching around here; it was polyester. It

was nice; it was expensive.

I said, "Norman, you ever been clean?" (Laughter) He said, "It's been years." He said ... (Laughter) He said, "I'm a hermit, you know. My dad got killed in the coal mines about 50 years ago. [He] went to work one day. I was just a little boy and uh ... he didn't come home. Some men came to our house and said the ... the roof fell in on him. I remember his funeral. I saw my uncle, haven't ever seen him again." I said, "Norman, I'm gonna run some water for you in your bathtub and I really want you to get clean, 'cause tonight I want to take you down to a church that's having a Gospel singing."

I went in his bathroom. I couldn't believe my eyes. I pulled the curtain back--oh. The floor was like dirt. The tub was so filthy, I had to take all the sacks out of it first. He saved paper sacks; I didn't know why. I took 'em all out and then I cleaned the tub with SOS pads and ... and when I turned the hot water faucet on, it fell in the tub. (Laughter) And I got it back up and taped it back on and got it ... it leaked a little, but it worked all right.

And I got his hot water ran [sic] in there and I went in there and I said, "Now, Norman, see, we ... you've got a new white shirt and a tie to go with your suit and you got new shoes and socks and underclothes. And let's really get clean. I mean, you know, really, really" ... and ... and I said, "When you're through, holler at me, okay?"

He went in there, in the bathroom and I went into the living room to look at that unbelievable house he lived in. Wallpaper sagging--rain had got [sic] in--falling off the walls and the ceiling and dirt everywhere. He had an old coal furnace that belched smoke in the wintertime. Something was wrong with it. I don't know how he lived at night when he turned that on in the wintertime. Sometimes he didn't use it; I saw that he had several covers on his bed he'd just crawl under.

And that old mattress, it was like that and ... and I shook the curtain and dust just came out of it. And I said, while he was in there in the bathtub ... I heard him in there. He was in there soaping, "Oop-a-loopa, loopa, loopa, loopa," he was beginning to sing. He finally said, "I'm okay, I'm ready. I'm ready. I'm clean."

I went in there and I pulled that curtain back. I had told him to get out of the tub and just put a towel around him. There he stood. His glasses were off, water dripping in the floor and I ... with a towel around him. And I looked at him and I ... have you ever seen mud that had just been smeared? (Laughter) I said, "Not clean enough Norman. I want you to get back in the tub? Now, Norman, I'm serious, now get clean. We want to be ..." And went back into the living room, looked ... went back in

after he said he was okay. That went on time and time again. Finally, the floor was wet; the mirror was wet; the tub was wet; I was wet; he was wet, but when he got finished ... I had scrubbed his head. I got him down like this; I didn't hurt him, but I got him in a headlock where he couldn't get away.

I got an SOS ... I got some Lava soap and I got a ... a sponge and I began to rub the top of his head. And I rubbed it and he'd go, "Mm-m-m, m-m-m." (Laughter) I rubbed it and pretty soon I looked and there was a bunch of white showing through. He had beautiful white hair.

I scrubbed some more; I said, "Put your face up here." And he went ... and I scrubbed his face and I gave him the sponge. I said, "All right, big boy, from the neck on down is yours; get it clean." (Laughter) When we got finished--water all over the place--you could rub your thumb on him anywhere and he'd squeak. (Laughter)

Program Note:

John: This is "FOF" and we're listening to a classic message, "A Man Called Norman." And I'd like to encourage you to stay with us, because we'll get an update in a few minutes from Mike Adkins. And this reminder, you can listen again online at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. Let's continue now with "A Man Called Norman" on "FOF."

End of Program Note

Mike: We went downtown to the church, to the Gospel singing. We sat down; people would come up to me and say, "Well, Brother Mike, we're really glad to have you visiting here tonight. God bless you. And who's your friend?" About the time they'd get his hand, I'd say, "That's Norman" and they'd go ... (Laughter)

One Sunday right after that, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and said, "Today is Norman's day. Take a Bible; get a pastor friend." We went over to Norman's. We got the Book of Romans and we began to tell him how we've all come short of the kingdom of God--how he could receive salvation. At first he didn't understand and then he grasped it. He ... he said to me, "Oh, I see what you mean." He said, "I used to listen when I was a little boy to the radio. My mom would play ... that preacher was on." He said, "You mean like my windows right there are so dirty."

He said, "And you're saying that Jesus--if I'll ask Him--will clean my heart up like ... like sometimes when I wash my windows?" I said, "Yeah, Norman, he'll clean up inside of you and then ... and then the

outside, too." And he said, "I ... I would like that." In that old house, with the wind blowing and the cracks in the walls--old dirty house--Norman prayed a simple prayer. And he said, "Jesus, Mike said that if I'd ask You to, You'd come into my heart and I'd like that. Come in" and he was washed white as snow.

I rejoiced and God began to do a work in him, but God began to do a work in *me*. I didn't mind if everybody in town knew I was helping Norman. I used to tell 'em down at the ball game a little bit during the intermission. A bunch of us guys would be standing around drinking a Coke and I'd say, just out of the clear blue--I couldn't stand it anymore; I wanted so ... praise so bad [*sic*] for this little good deed I was doing--I said, "I'm helping Norman." (Laughter)

These guys would look at me like, "Huh? What do you think they're gonna do in the second half, Fred? They gonna run the ... " And God said, "That's not loving your neighbor as yourself."

Now, folks, I want to tell you something. When I'm in a church that needs this message because they have a lack of love, I always mention to 'em that God is praised in a lot of places. Most Christians, generally speaking, love God, but not many love their neighbor as theirself [*sic*]. I'm gonna finish with this.

I had pride in me. God still works on it. He said, "Are you willing to help Norman, no matter how long it takes? Are you willing to help him, take him places, make him a part of your life? Are you really willing?" I said, "Oh, God, he's so unlovely sometimes." And ... and one night He challenged me with what I want to close with.

He said ... in the bathroom one night, I was standing there looking at his bathroom. I had remodeled his bathroom by now, fixed his faucet. I fixed his sink. I'd got him some new walls and I put him a new Celotex ceiling in and had a light I was working on. And ... and there was one thing in that bathroom that I just would not touch. It was over in the corner. And uh (Laughter) ... it was dirty and I just said, "No." (Laughter)

I said, "Now, God, sing in a choir? I'll sing in [a] choir; I love 'em. I love You all the time, but yeah, I'll do that. Travel all over the country and sing and tell 'em about Jesus? Okay, Lord. Not *that*." (Laughter) He kept troubling me about it, troubling me about it. I kept telling Him no, kept telling Him no. I fought that thing. I said, "No way."

He said, "All I want you to do is fix that ring and lid on the top of it." You see if you look at it and I did, it

... it had the two bolts that held the ring into the ceramic part. One of those bolts has broken off. And if you accidentally bumped into it, it would just swing down by that one bolt and hang beside ... beside the bowl. And He said, "Look over there." And I looked and someone ... and I'm gonna ask Him one of these days. I'm not brash towards our Father, but I'm gonna ask Him. I don't think He'll mind. I'm gonna ask Him who put that there. In a plastic bag was a brand-new ring and lid. All I had to do was take a bolt off, take the old one off, throw it away, put the new one on, put the bolts on it and it was finished; but I wasn't gonna touch it.

Sat over in front of my television. One night He troubled me so bad I couldn't watch television. I turned ... I finally turned around to Carmel, my wife and I just said, "I'm not gonna do it." (Laughter) She was looking at the Sears catalog or something. She looked at me like ... (Laughter) I couldn't stand it. About an hour later, I went up and got my coveralls out of the pantry and I put 'em on and put the collar up. (Laughter)

I pulled the sleeves down, found me some gloves that came down over the sleeves. She laughed and told me later if I'd have had an operating mask like a surgeon, I'd have had that on. (Laughter) I got my toolbox and I crept across the street real late over into Norman's bathroom, got the tools out, started working on that thing. And ... and ... and ... and that one bolt that was left, I just couldn't ... tried to get that box-end wrench on it. It just wouldn't ... and ... and if I was God and a guy was finally willing to do somethin' like this, I'd just have him touch that thing and it'd come right off, wouldn't you? But it wouldn't do it. I just ...

And ... and finally, I tried to get as close as I could to it (Laughter) without touching it, you know-- "Watch it, whoa, watch it." (Laughter) And I'll tell you something. You gotta hug one of them things to work on it, you know? (Laughter and Applause) And I just ... I just couldn't get it off. And so, I ... I know we're ... I know we're in a church and ... and ... and I'm gonna trust God, He's got a good sense of humor, because here's ... here's what I finally had to do. It's true. I had ... I had to get down on that old filthy floor so I could see up under that thing. (Laughter)

And I crawled (Laughter) and I took that wrench and I ... I finally got it on that nut and I moved it a little bit and old rust and dirt just hit me right in the eye, like that. (Laughter) I said, "This ain't the '700 Club!" (Laughter) This ain't 'PTL." And I began to have one of Jim's pity parties he was talking about and uh ... the Spirit of the Lord took care of it. He spoke to me and said, right there on the floor, He said, "When you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto Me." *It changed me.* I didn't care if anybody noticed. I didn't want any money. I didn't want any acclamation for it. I didn't ... I didn't care anymore. I just began to see when it said, "I'll give my body to be burned, but if I have love ... not love, it's for nothing."

I began to understand that word "Loving your neighbor as yourself." I went back home and I said, "God, what else will You have for me?" He said, "Son, get in your car and take those songs that I've given you all over the country and leave 'em at radio stations."

I think maybe He thought, "Maybe I can trust him, maybe use him a little bit." And I went in the car, over all the radio stations and He opened up television and suddenly, record sales came in and then doors opened to speak all over the country. But He never allowed any of that to happen in my life, not the first bit of it, no matter how much I agonized with Him for 35 years, no matter how much I hollered and said, "Why can't You use me, God? Why am I havin' to wait?" until He had taught me to love my neighbor as myself through my friend, my neighbor named Norman. He opened the doors and today one of the favorite things that I get to tell around the country, if it be in Indonesia or Holland or America, is the story of how God used the old man named Norman to teach me to love my neighbor as myself.

Closing Wrap:

John: Hm. What an unforgettable "FOF" broadcast, a real classic for you today. And it should be obvious why this message has resonated with so many over the years. Jim, this is the Gospel. This is "love your neighbor" lived out and told so powerfully, so *beautifully* by Mike Adkins.

Jim: Yeah, this is it, John. And uh ... I hope this message has inspired our listeners to really think about being a good neighbor, just what the Gospel says and befriend someone like a Norman and uh ... and really allow the Lord to change their own hearts, as well.

John: Hm.

Jim: That's what it's about, isn't it? And you know one of the best parts of working at FOF, John, is getting to meet *amazing* Christians like Mike Adkins.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: I mean, he's just a ... a wonderful human being. And uh ... I gave him a call yesterday and uh ... he agreed to be on the phone with us to answer a few follow-up questions about Norman.

Phone Call:

Mike, as you know, we've been listening to "A Man Called Norman," a great story of redemption and

you tell it so well, Mike. It blesses me every time I hear it. But over the last couple of days, we've been listening here at FOF. It's great to have you on the phone. We really enjoyed the stories you shared in the early part of the message, which we heard last time, Mike. But I'm just wondering, when the Lord asked you to take Norman on your family vacation to Opryland--

Mike: (Laughing)

Jim: --Mike, what was in your head?

Mike: I will ... I was ... I was wondering if I'd really heard God when I felt a leading to take him with us, you know, on vacation. But boy, it sure turned out to be the Lord and--

Jim: Oh, yeah.

Mike: --and He taught me so much through Norman. I've often told people and they'll say, "What's that story about?" I'll say, "Well, God I thought was sending me across the street to help an old fella, get him cleaned up and everything else. And uh ... the truth was, God was cleaning me up in a lot of ways, where maybe not physically did I need that, but I needed it a lot of ways spiritually.

Jim: Now your good friend Norman, he did pass away a few years back. Tell us about that uh--

Mike: Yeah.

Jim: --moment, that emotion.

Mike: Well, he had become almost a replacement for my grandfather. My grandfather passed away when I was just a teenager. And uh ... Norman just sort of replaced him in my heart.

And in April 24th, in 2000, he went to be with Lord. I got to be with him the last three hours and uh ... and it was the most ... one of the most precious times of my life, because I had felt God there so strongly—His presence.

Jim: Hm.

Mike: And uh ... I watched him uh ... shed his last tear and as I was comforting him, telling him that he was gonna see Jesus pretty soon; everything was all right. And uh ... he was ... he was at real peace. And I think ... I know he heard me and I know he understood what I was saying. But it was one of the most difficult times for me personally, because I ... I still miss him. He was a ... a blessing to my life, I could never describe to ya how much really.

Jim: You know, one of the things ... John and I, we were talking about last time is just the conviction that the story brings to our own hearts, to look for the people around us that are like the "Normans" in our own lives. And you're talkin' to an awful lot of people right now, Mike. And what would you say to encourage those of us that might give the excuse that, you know, the pace of life is too fast and I've got young kids and ... and the list goes on and on? What can you say?

Mike: Well, those things, of course, are very true. I ... I got a call a couple weeks ago. It was a young man's wife. And she said uh, "My husband started a men's group down at our church, age 7 to 70.

And they have each month a project where they go out and they help someone in great need. And that really blessed me to hear that.

Jim: Hm.

Mike: And then, you know, we get uh ... some wonderful, wonderful letters. I got one here. And this was a minister in Tennessee and he said, one Sunday after church a man came to his office, very distraught, crying. He said he'd been lookin' for work all over the area, been sleepin' in his car, driving around for six days. He said, "I've got a full tank of gas now and I heard about a job 200 miles from here, where I might uh ... get some work."

And he ... but he began to weep and he said, "I'm so exhausted, I don't think I can make the trip." So, the pastor bought him a motel room and when they went in to pay for the motel room, his wife, the pastor's wife and kids had followed in another car. And when they got to the motel and went inside, his children asked their mom. "Uh ... What's ... what's going on? What's this about?"

And she explained how desperate the man was. And they ... the children were just flabbergasted. They said, they didn't know any human could be that alone. And so, when the man came out of the motel office, the children ran up to him and the little boy handed him a dime.

Jim: Hm.

Mike: And he said uh ... "The tooth fairy left this for me, but I don't need it."

Jim: Oh.

Mike: And then, the little girl had a box of Graham crackers a lady at the church'd given her. And she said, "I don't need this either." And that so profoundly impacted that man, that it gave the minister a great opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus with him. And then on the way home, the daughter said, "That ... that man reminded me of Norman." They'd seen—

John: Hm.

Mike: --that story. (Chuckling)

Jim: Oh, yeah.

Mike: --and heard that story.

Jim: Well, Mike, it's such a powerful story and even that little story about Norman's impact illustrates the point and for people to get involved in their neighborhood and in their community, that's really the essence of it and do it in name of Christ. It's not simply to be a good friend, but it does have a purpose to it and that's to lead someone to the Lord, right?

Mike: That's the bottom line, because if they don't know the Lord, wow! It ... it's almost like, what's the point?

Jim: You know, one place I'd love to be in heaven is standing near you as you and Norman say hello to each other in heaven again. That'll be great ... a great day.

Mike: (Weeping) I'm sorry

Jim: I want to see you two embrace each other, my friend.

Mike: I look forward to that. (Sigh) Sorry, I didn't want to get emotional. (Sigh) But thank you for that.

Jim: Mike, we love you. Thank you for your witness and your example to us all.

Mike: Thank you.

Jim: God bless you.

Mike: God bless you.

End of Phone Call

Closing Voice Track:

John: What a touching way to finish this two-day program and it's a "FOF" classic, pretty to see why, isn't it? Um ... we've enjoyed our relationship with Mike Adkins over the years so much. He has such a big heart and we've heard from hundreds and hundreds of people who have really responded to the message of this presentation.

To get a copy on CD to share with a friend, just make a donation to FOF today. We'll send that to you as our thank you for your financial support of what we do here. Our number is 800, the letter A and the word FAMILY; 800-232-6459. Or you can find details about Mike and the CD or download of this program at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio .

Our program was provided by FOF and on behalf of Jim Daly and the entire team here, thanks for listening in. I'm John Fuller, inviting you back next time, when we'll once again, turn our hearts toward home.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Product Type: Broadcast

Most Recent

Air Date: 03-03-2014

Guests: Dr. Tony Evans, Jim Daly, John Fuller

Transcript

Opening Voice Track:

John: On today's "FOF," Dr. Tony Evans wants to improve your perspective about life and about family.

Excerpt:

Tony: The Bible says you know when you've been blessed when it's well with you. Blessing is having a unified family, not a big bank account. You can't buy happiness, folks, I don't care how much you pay for it. And the world is trying to sell you happiness and we're buying it. You can't buy it. The Lord gives it away.

End of Excerpt

John: Wow! What a message that is, a message that really material things can't hold a candle to a healthy close family and those eternal things that we have in Jesus Christ. And uh ... you're gonna hear more from Tony Evans on today's "FOF" with Focus president and author, Jim Daly. I'm John Fuller and Jim, quite a program ahead of us here.

Opening Wrap:

Jim: (Laughing) Yeah. People hopefully heard that energy. I mean, Tony always brings it and uh ... you could tell, he believes what he talks about.

John: Oh, absolutely.

Jim: Uh ... society does try to tell us that happiness can be found with a ... a bigger house, a bigger car, the stuff and as Dr. Evans said there, a bigger *bank account*. And uh ... many of us get caught up on that treadmill of chasing the illusion of enough. So many people that have done well in business, we'll talk to them and you know, it's always the next deal, the next dollar. It seems to be an empty well that they're tryin' to fill.

John: Hm.

Jim: Uh ... in the meantime, you may have lost your family in that pursuit. And family of course, if where that true and lasting success *can* be found uh ... because those results tend to be eternal. And I'm lookin' forward to this presentation.

I'll tell you what. It's also the message of our upcoming theater event, the documentary, *Irreplaceable*. It's gonna air here in the U.S. on May 6th, in Canada on May 7th, in theaters across North America those two nights. And uh ... it is going to be *wonderful*. It's again, called *Irreplaceable: The Definitive Story of Family*.

John: And we'll have more details for you at the close of the program, but let me say, get your ticket now--

Jim: Hm.

John: --when you go to www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. And for those who don't know him, Dr. Evans has been on this broadcast a number of times.

Jim: Uh-hm.

John: He's senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. He's also the president of The Urban Alternative. And uh ... here he is now on today's "FOF."

Body:

Dr. Evans: Well, beginning today, we want to talk a little bit about marriage. And please forgive me if I'm quite frank. Please forgive me if I cut the mustard straight. Please forgive me if I do not make you

feel comfortable in the divorce that you have filed for or are thinking about.

Please forgive me if I make you uncomfortable about the non-Christian that you are thinking about marrying. Please forgive me if I make you feel uncomfortable in the bed you're sleeping in and the person on the other side is not the one who you've committed the rest of your life to. Please forgive me for that.

Please forgive me for dealing with the fact that, the reason why we have miserable homes is because we have miserable men who don't know what manhood is, but bring boyhood into the home and expect his wife to respect him as a man. Please forgive me for that.

Please forgive me, ladies, for talking during this series about women who have decided that careers are more important than their homes, the dollar is more important than their kids and they have traded their home for the marketplace. Please forgive me for doin' that. But I'm gonna do it all anyway. (Applause)

Because what we need (Applause) ... what we need are men and women and singles alike who have decided that when you want to find out the best way a product is to function, go to the one who manufactured it. Because usually the manufacturer knows what he meant by the product he constructed. God is the manufacturer of marriage. And He says, "How come everybody's using My product without My rule book?" You can only have a broken product when you don't read the directions.

Psalms 128 paints a picture of what God's family looks like when they operate God's way. And so, here is where we start: He begins with a generic statement, a statement that is true for all, man, woman, boy and girl. "How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His way." Now before He does anything, He gives you His thesis. "How blessed is the man, the woman, the boy, the girl, everyone who fears the Lord." What does that mean? It means that if you want to be blessed--the Hebrew word for "blessed" means "internal happiness--if you want to be internally happy, you must start with your relationship with God.

Now do you know why there are a lot of unhappy marriages? Well, very simply, there are a lot of unhappy people living in the house. And what they're tryin' to do is, create happiness. And ladies and gentlemen, you cannot create happiness. You got it or you don't. You can create a party and have a good time, but you cannot create happiness. That's why when a couple says, "Listen, what we need is ... to do is to get away for awhile together." And so, they'll plan this expensive vacation. And the expensive vacation is designed to eradicate all five years of miserable marriage and we're goin' away

for two weeks and over these two weeks, we're gonna solve having spent \$2,500, the misery that we're living in. See, the problem is, what they forget is, that the cruise has to end. The plane has to come back and you gotta go back home. And if you've not changes the people, you have not changed the marriage no matter how nice the vacation. How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord.

Now the first thing we have to understand is, "What does it mean to fear the Lord?" To put it another way, "How blessed is everyone who takes God seriously?" How blessed is everyone who is not shuckin' and jivin' with their God. How blessed is everyone who's not a SMO, Sunday Mornin' Only. How blessed is everyone who's not just a ... a ... who gives religious nod. How blessed is everyone who takes God for real, who is not playing religious games, who is not playing church anarchy, who is not playing religiosity, but who is taking God dead serious. In the way that we put it in the streets, "serious as a heart attack."

How blessed is everyone who has decided that they're going to take God for real. Now the word "fear" has two sides of one coin. It means to look up in awe or respect and it means to look out for justice or judgment. When the Bible says, "Take God seriously," it says take God seriously for two reasons. One, because God is God and He's worthy to be taken seriously. "There is none like unto your God." But the second reason why God is to be taken seriously is because judgment starts in the household of faith. When God starts spanking, He doesn't start with the world, He starts with His family. And the reason that some of your lives are not on kilter is because God is doing some spankin', because you're not taking Him seriously.

You're a member in good standing. You may even pay your money. You may have even pledged a great deal to the building fund, but God says you take Him seriously when, what? You walk in His ways, that is when you do what He says do, how He says do it. Now some of it won't be fun, as you'll see, but it always works, because God has never arranged anything that fails.

Verse two then breaks it down further: "When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you." If you take God seriously, you will eat with the fruit of your hand and it will go well with you.

Now, that is a very poetic verse and in order for you to get the scenery of the verse, let me repeat it: "You will eat ... ah, with the fruit of your hands ... ah and it will go well with you." The sense of the verse is a relaxed person with a relaxed mental attitude, in a relaxed state of mind, enjoying life because they're enjoying life unto God.

You and I live in a dog-eat-dog world--a hectic world--where we are trying to make it. And do you know one of the reasons that most families break up is because one or both are trying to make it? Can you remember how when you and your wife first got married, you didn't have anything, you could have barely afforded the apartment you lived in, you didn't know how you were gonna have all the food, but you were happy. You ... you enjoyed the little bit that you had. In other words, hot dogs and baked beans were a ... a ... a diner's delight. Now you can afford steak and potatoes and none of you wants to eat together at the same table. (Audience Reaction) What's happened? You have lost the ability to enjoy the fruit of your labor.

Some of you middle-class folks, yes you, some of you middle class and upper middle-class folks are doin' good now. You don't have two cars in the garage; you've got three cars in the garage. You don't have a three- or four-bedroom house; you may have a five- or six-bedroom house. Now you want to ... you are moving up the ladder. You're climbing to success, but you look at your family and it's deteriorating under you. Why? Because you have lost the ability to enjoy the fruit of your labor.

What the fear of God does is give you back the ability to relax. [Do] you know why? Because "It will be well with you." Please don't miss that line, folks. Please don't miss this line. It will be well with you. Do you know what that means? Hell can't stop what God's got planned for you, when you walk in the fear of the Lord. That takes the pressure off. That takes the pressure off. It means that ... that, that promotion is yours. Now yes, you have to work and yes, you have to work hard and yes, you should be committed, but hell can't take that promotion when God grants it.

What God offers you, believers, is a relaxed mental attitude and you cannot have a happy home if every day you're bringin' home the mess at work, if every day you're bringing home the problems of life, the problems on the job. What the Bible says is, when you take God seriously, I give you a relaxed mental attitude and it will be well with you.

What is God saying? We sing the song, "God Will Take Care of You" and God is saying, "Then let Me take care of you." Don't break your neck to make it to the top. Break your neck to know your God and let Me lift you to the top. How does James put it? Humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you. Now do I mean, don't try to make a living? Don't try to better yourself? No. I mean, don't sell out your family to do it.

Program Note:

John: There's some challenging advice from Dr. Tony Evans about priorities on today's "FOF." And

you can get a CD or audio download of this entire presentation. In fact, we'll have extra content on that and a copy of Dr. Evans' book, *Marriage Matters*, when you get in touch. Our number, 800-A-FAMILY or we're online at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. All right, in a few moments Dr. Evans will explain why men should always look for ways to serve their wives. Let's continue now with this message from Dr. Tony Evans on "FOF."

End of Program Note

Tony: The will of God cannot be loss to the man or woman who walks with God. And then He gives you a picture of the home where each member is in right tune with God. Verse 3, "Your wife will become like a fruitful vine." The assumption is that if you're married to a woman and she's not a fruitful vine, she's a thorn bush. (Laughter) I can understand why you're unhappy, because the Bible says that it is better for a man to live on the top of a roof than to live in the house with a miserable woman. (Audience reaction)

Proverbs say, there is nothing more miserable than a man who has to live in a house with a miserable woman. That's pressure 24 hours a day. She wakes up fussin'. You call her, she's fussin'. At night she's fussin'. She fusses in her dreams. I mean (Laughter), it's bad. Ah ... but what men tend to do is say, "Hey, come on now. This woman is drivin' me crazy." I know, but the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says, what the problem is, is bad atmosphere. And bad atmosphere breeds thorns, not fruit.

You see, the problem in our homes, gentlemen and I'm starting with the men, 'cause our God always starts with the men, but I'm not gonna leave the women alone. (Audience reaction) But God does start with the men and the first thing He says is that when God looks at the home, He wants to see what kind of atmosphere the man is providing. Bad atmosphere produces bad vines. God atmosphere produces good vines.

The first thing you do, gentlemen, when you knock on that door and come home is, you come and say, "Dear, I have come to serve you." (Cheers and Applause) I'm losin' the men, ladies; don't clap. (Laughter) You see, we've got this idea that what we do is ... that what we do is, we go ... we go to work to serve the boss. We go to serve the man, because the man is gonna give us some money. And there is no question that we serve the man because the man is gonna give us some money.

The Bible says, you serve your wife, because one, she gave you those children. Two, she gives you those clothes. Three, she cooks those vittles. Four, she cleans the house. She even helps you pay the bills by going to work. How dare you ask rather than give. (Applause)

Now what ... you say, "What am I gonna get out of this deal?" You're gonna get a fruitful vine. Now where would a vine be? In your house. What would a vine be doin'? Makin' you happy. (Laughter) So, you want to turn on your wife, you want to turn on your wife? Come home givin', rather than getting. Come home serving, rather than being served. Come home helping and I guarantee you, she'll ask you the question, "How can I help you?"

See, what you want is this woman who's giving, but the Bible declares that you have got to come having a mindset that says, "My family is more important than anything else in my life. My wife is the No. 1 commitment of my life. It's a tragedy. We're gonna talk about this later on. Husbands get married. They finally catch the fish out of the sea that they wanted and get dull. No more dates, no more romancin', no more surprises, no more flowers, no more love letters. I mean ... I mean, his attitude is, "You got me, Baby. You don't need nothin' more." (Laughter)

The Bible says, the man who knows his God comes home with that fear of God in the operation of serving. And then his wife becomes what he wanted her to be. And the only reason she married you was because she was excited and the only reason she got excited was because you served her. "Where do you want to go? What can I buy you for dinner? What can I do for you? Can I help you with that? Let me walk on the right side of the street." You know, we used to walk on the curb side, so that the idea of that is if a car comes up, you get it first. And now, we don't walk over there, "I ain't goin' first." (Laughter) We used to open the car door. We used to say, "Okay, look, I'm here to serve you. Here let me help you in." Now, look, you'll liable to ... it's good if you get in before the brother takes off. (Laughter) And you ought to be helping her up the curb. And you ought to be helping her in and you ought to be serving her and you ought to make her feel like she is the queen. And I guarantee you, the happy juice will flow. (Laughter)

But now ladies (Audience Reaction and Laughter), I want you to know where the wife is. It says that she is in the house. Titus 2 is clear, "Let your women be keepers at home." Now, don't misread that. It does not say let your women be "stayers" at home; it says let them be keepers at home. Keepers at home does not mean a wife cannot work. I disagree with those who say a wife cannot work. But what it *does* mean is that your work, if you are married, that your work has *never* ... is *never* supposed to take precedence over your family.

If your work takes precedence over your family, then you need to change jobs or cut back on income or go part time or something. But a husband can only woo a wife who's there. And if you are so tired because of the job you have that you can never cook for your family, it's always McDonald's; it's always

Burger King; It's always sandwiches; it's always cereal, you've got a problem there that you and your husband have got to address. What motivates a man to make you queen is when he feels he's king. And if you're never letting the king of the forest eat, if you are never able to brush the mane of the king because you're too tired, if you're never able to be in the house so you can grow around the house, then you need to make some adjustments outside of the house so that you may be part of the house. (Audience reaction) Because it's hard for a man to love a woman who's not there.

The woman, he says is in the home. And that means that there are certain things that takes prior precedence over money, God says. And what takes precedence over money is your family. The husband must lead, but the wife must be willing to be led. It says that she is within the home as a fruitful vine, that she has made herself available to the love gestures of a husband who comes home to serve.

He cannot come home and say, "How can I help?" and you say, "[By] leaving me alone." He's got to come home with that spirit that you gotta ... you see that he's *trying*, he's giving all that he can to say, "I want to do better. I want to give you time. Yes, I am tired, but I *will* help with the kids. Yes, I *will* do my part." You've got to give him that right and you've gotta show appreciation for it. It's a responsibility.

He closes verse 3 by saying, "Your children will be like olive plants around your table." Now his kids are brought into it. Now you know why He calls them plants? 'Cause they're not trees yet; they're just kids. You're the tree. You know what an olive plant was? It was being groomed to produce a lot of olives when it grew up to be a tree. And the plant would only grow depending upon the environment that it's in. You see, He's using a kind of thing that relates to environment. And what He's saying is, if you want your kids to be contributing trees, you've got to minister to them while they're little plants.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a tragedy here and the tragedy is represented in this room where we are asking our children to raise themselves. We are letting the TV raise our children; we're letting the neighborhood kids raise our children. We're letting the school kids raise our children; we're letting the secular school system raise our children, because we are so busy partying-hearty, watching TV, workin' overtime, that children are raising themselves. And now we want to know how come all these children are having children?

We're living in a turnkey generation, where now you pin the house key onto the kid. Five-year-old kids walkin' home, so they get home by themselves. Now ... now what are they gonna do in a house by themselves? It says they're olive plants. They have the potential of growing up to be glorious trees for God, but they cannot be glorious trees if they are not being put in good atmosphere. Don't you see? Folks, we've given up the family and now we are seeing it in our children.

And so, He concludes in verse 4, "Ble ... behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord." If you fear the Lord, you will be blessed. How will you be blessed? With a million dollars? No, it doesn't say that. The Bible says you know when you've been blessed when it's well with you and your family is together; then you've been blessed. Blessing is having a unified family, not a big bank account. You can't buy happiness, folks, I don't care how much you pay for it. And the world is trying to sell you happiness and we're buying it. You can't buy it. The Lord gives it away.

And then He goes on and He says, "And you will see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life." I like that. What He says is, good homes make good churches. And you will see the prosperity of God's program among God's people all the days of your life.

And then He says, "Indeed, you will see your children's children." You know what fearing God does? It helps you live longer. You know, some of you are gonna die before your time, because you left God out. Some of you are gonna die before your time, because you got so ... so involved in the work that it destroyed you before you lived out your full days. You won't see your children's children. You won't see your children's children. Ladies and gentlemen, God is the manufacturer of the family, for those who fear Him.

Closing Wrap:

John: Uh-hm, kind of a sobering thought there on this "FOF" broadcast, Dr. Tony Evans, closing out our time here right now with a reminder about the significance of respecting and ... and truly fearing the Lord. That uh ... is foundational for having a strong Christian family, to look at God as the designer of family.

Jim: Yeah and John, the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And if you're not familiar with that Scripture or what that's really saying, it's not to say you need to be trembling there and hiding from God. He loves you. That fear is about knowing that eventually we're gonna take our last breath and we're accountable. And therefore, in this life, to fear the Lord in that healthy way, to say, someday--

John: Hm.

Jim: --I'm gonna be accountable for my actions and uh ... we want to be sure you have a relationship with Jesus Christ. I mean, we're ... that is the thing to get right in this life, is to know God and know the Son of God.

John: Hm.

Jim: Uh ... I think when you look at uh ... what Dr. Evans was saying there, what I'm walking away with is the fact that it's all about those priorities. If we put the Lord first and our family second and live that out every day, we'll have not only a wonderful life, we will reap eternal rewards.

John: Hm.

Jim: And uh ... that in the end, guess what? It's what it's all about, not the car, not the house. It's about these things.

John: Hm. Well, we'd love to talk to you further if you have questions about your eternal destiny. Call us or stop by the website. We've got some resources there. We also have some details, Jim, about something that ties in here to what Dr. Evans has shared, an upcoming film and a DVD project that follows it and it's very exciting.

Jim: (Chuckling) It is, John and you know what? In fact, Dr. Evans is one of the contributors. There's many in the project, but he is one. We've put together a 12-week DVD small-group curriculum called The Family Project and it is exploring the why behind the idea of family. It ... I've seen it. I mean, it has helped me put into perspective. It's not the tips and the how-to's; it's why do we need to behave in a way that honors the Lord? It's because He designed it. Ho ... why do we honor our spouse? Because He has told us to do so.

John: Hm.

Jim: And when we do those things, as Dr. Evans was saying, uh ... wonderful and beautiful things can happen in your family. And the movie *Irreplaceable*, which is that documentary that we're using as the jumping off point for The Family Project, will air May 6th in the U.S. and May 7th in Canada. That's a theater event and you should be able to find a theater nearby that you can go to and get your tickets now. We are hoping that 150 to 200,000 people will come out on those two nights and uh ... experience *Irreplaceable: The Definitive Story of Family*.

Closing Voice Track:

John: Yeah, we really see this as a big, big one-night--

Jim: (Chuckling) Oh, yes.

John: --where you'll take friends and family members and co-workers. You'll come out *en masse* to show your support of family and this project. And I know, Jim, people are gonna leave inspired, reminded about the gift of family that they are enjoying or that they're aspiring to. It ... it's really a ... a wonderful one-night event, May 6th--

Jim: Hm.

John: --as you said in the U.S., May 7th in Canada. And we've got details for you and you can find links to buy your tickets today at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. And when you get in touch, ask about Dr. Evans' book. It reflects that message that you heard from him today, called *Marriage Matters*. It's a practical engaging guide to that covenant of marriage. And Dr. Evans examines that agreement that you entered into on your wedding day, with more biblical insights about marriage and God's standards for marriage. And he suggests ways that you can strengthen your commitment to one another, beyond what you've heard in this radio program.

So, ask about that and a CD or audio download of this particular presentation, which as I said earlier, will have additional content. You can listen to that again, perhaps as a couple or pass that along to someone. Again, we're at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio or call 1-800, the letter A and the word FAMILY; 800-232-6459.

Our program today was provided by FOF and made possible by generous listeners like you. I'm John Fuller, inviting you back tomorrow, when you'll learn how to choose the best type of school for your child, as we once again, turn our hearts toward home.

RESTORING THE SOUL

Product Type: Broadcast

Most Recent

Air Date: 08-21-2014

Guests: Ravi Zacharias, Jim Daly, John Fuller

Transcript

Opening Voice Track:

John: On today's "Focus on the Family," you'll hear Dr. Ravi Zacharias, who shared how he became a believer in Jesus Christ.

Excerpt:

Ravi: I found the Lord at the age of 17 on a bed of suicide in Delhi, when a New Testament was brought to my bedside and John chapter 14 was laid open. The words were, "Because I live, you shall live also." And I just lay there. I said, "God, if it's a life that only You can offer, I want it. Lift me out of this hospital bed and I will leave no stone unturned in my pursuit of truth.

End of Excerpt

John: And Dr. Zacharias has been pursuing truth, *biblical* truth, for more than 40 years now and you'll hear his thoughts about being an authentic Christian in today's culture, on today's broadcast with Focus president and author, Jim Daly and I'm John Fuller.

Opening Wrap:

Jim: Uh ... John, Dr. Ravi Zacharias is a very wise teacher of God's Word. I thoroughly enjoy listening to him.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: And I can guarantee you, this is a message that can really help you walk faithfully with the Lord, in

spite of enticements and potential compromises that are always all around us in the culture.

John: Hm.

Jim: Dr. Zacharias is the host of his own radio program and podcast called "Let My People Think." I love that title. And he's the author of dozens of helpful and challenging books on Christian faith.

John: Well, here he is now, Dr. Ravi Zacharias on today's "Focus on the Family."

Body:

Ravi: In this privilege of travel, which I have done for about 25 years now, it is really the hazard of my existence. Over all of these 25 years, I have never known a time where I have packed my bags and left and have been happy to be doing so. You don't want to be away from the family. You don't want to leave from the comfort of home and certainly, you don't want to be jostled around 37,000 feet in the air. It is not a happy situation in which to be. And yet as I travel, I listen a lot. I have learned a lot and I don't think I could exchange this life for anything else because of the privilege God has given to me of meeting some extraordinary people all over this world.

And as you're traveling and as you're listening, it is very interesting what you encounter. And I believe, over the years, one of the images that stands out in my mind is, I think it has happened a few hundred and I don't believe I'd be exaggerating if I could even say a few thousand times.

I'll be sitting across the table from some man or some woman who has come to the meeting that we have just had. And as the conversation ensues, the person will divulge to me that they have made a complete mess of their lives. And nine times out of 10, they will say something like this, "I don't know why I got onto this track." "I don't know why I started this habit." "I don't know why I began this relationship." "I don't know why I said what I did." "I don't know why I allowed my mind to be exposed to the things that I started to see and read." "I don't know why I started to listen to this kind of material."

And the more I have heard those over the years, I have come to this question very recently, not only because I think of it from the perspective of the person sitting on the *other* side of the table, but from *my own* perspective where, as strong as you may be in your Christian commitment, the allurements around you do not seem to diminish any. In fact, they seem to get stronger. And when the body is weary and fatigued, it seems as though that the barbs and the ideas and the lifestyles that are around you seem to have some kind of claw into them almost beckoning you to wander off that track if only momentarily.

And so, I've asked myself this question--listen to me carefully, please: "Is it possible ... is it possible to be a perfectly contented individual in your life, completely at peace with that calmness of spirit and having absolute fulfillment of every desire without wandering away from the law of God?" Is it possible to find that complete fulfillment in the mo ... innermost recesses of your heart, without straying from the parameters that God has provided for us in the blueprint of our existence?

And I take three principal thoughts from an Old Testament character whose name is Daniel. And as I go through that passage of Daniel's life, I wish I could give you the entire context, but I really can't take the time to do it. But you're talking about somewhere around the late 500's before Christ. The nation had now collapsed.

That which they had dreamed for the city of Jerusalem was not to be, because 1,000 years before, God had brought the people of Israel from their enslavement in Egypt, through their 40-year wandering, into the land flowing with milk and honey--the land of Canaan. That's where He said He was going to plant them as a people. It was only a journey of a few short weeks--four to six weeks--but God took them the long route around 'til almost two generations had gone by and it took them 40 years in that wandering.

It is important for us to know what the Bible says as to why the Lord took them that long route around. He said, "I took you that long way so that you could see your heart and see the wickedness in your own heart. I took you the long way, so that you will learn that man does not live by bread alone. I took you that long way, so that you may understand that even in the difficulties you faced, I never let you down."

Listen to me, please. There were three simple principles He'd been trying to teach them--the principle of humility, when they saw their own hearts and saw its wretchedness; the principle of spirituality, that humankind does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; and the principle of faith, that sometimes you cannot be completely in control of your life; that there is a God to whom you must submit and trust Him to be able to take you through. These three principles are intrinsic needs for any nation that is going to be great--the principal of humility, the principal of spirituality and the principle of faith.

But after these 1,000 years of having established them as a nation, they were not going to [be] able to learn those three simple principles. Jerusalem was now gone. The temple had now been ravaged and they were in enslavement in Babylon.

Can I ask you something? Do you see the problem analogous to *our* situation today? The decisions that we are now making in our courtrooms; the decisions that we now make in the highest offices of the

land; the choices by which we are allowing young people to guide themselves under the pretext that no longer is there a moral center to life--you may live any way you please--even the lifestyles of those who stand as supposed exemplars of society. I ask you this: Is not this the same road we have entered upon?

So that, if I were to stand on a university campus today and talk about humility, talk about spirituality and talk about faith, you can be sure of at least one, if not two things. Some professor somewhere will be taking notes and call it as material unfit for academic discussion. And others will just mock this as a kind of a "vestigial" belief from some past gone culture, no longer relevant to society in our time. Yet, I remind these intellectuals, remind leaders in our time that, if we will listen to those who are coming out of countries where humility was openly lost, spirituality was openly debunked and faith was a missing quantity of their lives, if we listen to them, we will understand the tragic road we could be entering into also.

And so I say to you, the timeliness of a man like Daniel, the things that he did as he faced the uncertainty in his time ... let me take you through three very simple principles and I think you will find if you take these principles--and I want to say this as honestly as I can before God--this is a simple message that I want to give to you, but it's had a profound impact on my own life. I have asked the Lord to take these three principles and sear them into my conscience, so that I will never violate them again.

These are the three principles I want to give to you. The first one is this: In the early part of the book of Daniel, here is what happens. Nebuchadnezzar has raped Jerusalem. He has plundered the temple. He has taken the vessels in the temple and brought it [*sic*] into Babylon, as the Babylonian monarch. Everything that gave the Israeli people their identity had been ravaged.

But then he did something more. He sent a decree to find the best minds in Israel, find the most intellectually capable men and women; find the best of them either from royal descent or academic capability. "Bring them into my palace," he said. "Treat them with lavishness. Give them the best of everything I have and train them in Babylonian philosophy."

Do you see what he was doing? He was taking the sharpest minds and re-inputting a worldview so that they then, would become the best spokespersons for what it is that Nebuchadnezzar himself believed. The lines were clearly drawn. And so, Daniel is one of those young minds in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. He makes a staggering decision that stands out from the rest of them and he took three of his friends with him in that decision.

It was this. They were being served up the best of the foods and Daniel said, "No." He went and saw the steward of the palace and he said, "I want you to do something for me. Please don't give me this choice banqueting menu night after night that Nebuchadnezzar wants us to enjoy. Give me just a meager diet. I'll be glad for some vegetables and just something uh ... that is not anywhere near as enriching and as lavish as this. I want to live an ordinary life here within this palace and that's all I'm asking of you."

The steward said, "I don't know how I can do this for you, Daniel, because if the king sees you looking weaker and body not as healthy as the others who are eating all that uh ... good, nourishing food we are giving, he will blame me for doing something that I ought not to have done." Daniel said, "I'll take the responsibility. I'll promise you, at the end of so many days if I don't look as healthy as the rest of them, we can talk again. But I don't want to eat from the king's banqueting menu."

You can think of many reasons why he did that. It could have been ceremonially that he didn't want to pollute himself. But may I suggest something that I think really struck me when I saw that? I believe it is this. You and I are given the privilege by God to train our appetites. And I'm talking now about the passions.

Most people who sit across that table, long gone into the wrong side of life, have trained their appetite with ideas and decisions that have restructured within their own minds what it is they think they need. And by redefining what it is they think they need, they end up hungering for the wrong things and those wrong things end up ultimately devouring them.

Your passion, your appetite, is a gift from God, as mine is and we are given the privilege of *training* that appetite and disciplining that appetite. And let me tell you, some people will live in a way to see how far they can go as close to the wrong side of living and Daniel wanted to see how far he could stay from that line and still retain contact and effectiveness. And he decided he was going to do it by not getting used to the lavishness at a king's table.

You see what I'm saying here? If it is possible, ladies and gentlemen, that any one of our lives has gone wrong tonight, may I suggest to you, it is not when you chose to cross the line, but it is possibly a line that was not drawn well *before* the line that you ultimately crossed. And behind the scenes of a godly man or woman, I see where these lines are drawn for themselves. And I present to you a man who has trained his desires by not wanting to get spoiled in his taste. It is easier to say "no" before you have tasted it, than to say "no" after you have tasted it. Like the old potato chip ad, "We dare you to take ... not to take one, we dare you to stop after taking just one."

Program Note:

John: Hm ... you're listening to Dr. Ravi Zacharias here on "Focus on the Family" and in a moment, you'll hear what happened when Daniel had to choose between uh ... honoring the law of God or the law of the land. And you can get a CD with quite a bit of extra content of this program when you call 800-A-FAMILY; 800-232-6459. Or get the instant download at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. Let's go ahead and return now to Dr. Ravi Zacharias on today's "Focus on the Family."

End of Program Note

Ravi: A few days ago I got a very difficult telephone call. And I shall have to leave the person unnamed, but it was a very heartbreaking call for me. It was after 11 o'clock at night. And the gentleman who called me was a medical doctor. He said, "Ravi." I said, "How are you doing?" He said, "Not very well." He said, "Something happened a few hours ago that I wish had never happened." He said, "I was on emergency duty," and he said, "and a woman was brought in very ... just as I started my duty. She was a woman who had ... had been brought in from a motel in a case of spousal abuse, she had been so *badly battered* by her husband."

He said, "I got the whole team desperately trying to rescue her and I somehow felt we were not going to." But because he's more than an emergency physician--he's been a surgeon, too--he said, "I decided to do something that I probably should never have done and most emergency surgeons would not have done." He said, "I said to the staff, 'My only hope is to give a direct heart massage.'" So he cut open the chest to reach into the heart to try and give a direct massage to save that life.

And, in the process of that, unknown to him, he nicked his own finger. He said, "After it was over and we were washing up and I saw this paper cut type of thing and the bleeding there, I immediately asked the staff to look into her paraphernalia. And they found she was a drug addict of all of the worse kinds of drugs. They found all of that drug equipment in there and now this man on the phone was crying as I was praying with him. He said, "I think I have risked my life and I will not know for several weeks whether indeed, I have got what I fear this woman may herself have had."

And, you know, I thought to myself that night as Margie and I talked. I said, "A little paper cut, a little paper cut and you put your whole life in jeopardy for heavens knows what." May I suggest to you, that's the point of where you choose to draw the line morally. Sometimes analogously, it may be a paper cut--one minor decision--but what you put your life in contact with could be far more deadly than just that

initial bruise that you're thinking about.

And as I look at a man like Daniel, I bowed my head after I finished writing just this thought. "Lord, help me to draw the lines long before and I promise You I'll make that commitment to You so that I don't ever have to worry about getting so close where I'm on enemy territory then, uh ... in terms of my passion and lifestyle, but long before I have warded off this paper cut--this slight gash--that could be so serious."

And so, his first line of strength, as I see it, was he knew where to draw the line of *resistance*. He probably knew had he crossed that line of resistance, much else would have become irresistible. But secondly was his line of *dependence*. And here I think even a greater characteristic emerges from Daniel. You see, he was taught in all of the learning now that Babylonian philosophy had to give to him. And they're rich in their own heritage and their own thought.

With all of this knowledge and all of this education, King Nebuchadnezzar one day found himself in a quandary. He had a dream, a dream of a multi-composed statue, head of gold, chest and arms of silver, the mid-section and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet made of an amalgam of iron and clay. He had this dream, but he wasn't going to share it with anybody and it terrified him, because that dream was repeated. He said, "I want all of the astrologers in this land to come and interpret my dream for me, but the way I'm going to find out whether your interpretation is right is first, for you to tell me what I dreamed about."

And the astrologers said, "King, you've got to be joking. Nobody's gonna be able to tell you this." And in his despotic frenzy, he was going to obliterate all of them unless one of them came up and explained ... told him what his dream was.

Finally, they found Daniel. And Daniel spent hours in prayer with his three friends and came, and he said, "King, I'm not qualified to tell you what it is you dreamt about. I don't know. But let me tell you something. I know a God. I know a God who's a revealer of mysteries and I want you to know that, as I tell you your dream, it is not Daniel that's telling you this dream. I'm not qualified enough, King. But my God, who is an "unfolder" of mysteries and sp ... puts light into dark places, has helped me to see what it is you dreamt. Here is what you dreamt, King."

Nebuchadnezzar was overcome by that and then he asked Daniel for the interpretation. Do you know where this principle comes into me here now? He knew his line of dependence. He knew where knowledge and intellect and education ended and where trust and wisdom in God began. It's a very

important line of distinction.

Because today we have sold out. We have sold out to the altar of the intellect. And I want to say to you, that as I go to places and see young students who are in so many ways brainwashed by certain philosophical theory, let me make it absolutely clear to you, lest anyone have any doubt. Evolution in its starting point and even in its ... some of its sustaining ideas is not a scientific theory; it's a philosophically driven theory. There are philosophical presuppositions in that about macroevolutionary theory from an antitheistic viewpoint. It is philosophically driven.

This is what led to the dramatic change in the life of Philip Johnson, professor at Berkeley, when he began to study this so ... so profoundly and said, "This thing is philosophically, prejudicially driven. It is not only scientifically driven." And you have read some of his books that have come out as a result. And I'm saying to you, it is going to take courageous young men and women who are willing to stand today and know where the line from the intellect leaves and where the line of trust and wisdom begins.

The story goes on. And finally, those who hated Daniel, who wanted to do him in, went to uh ... one another to discuss what they could do to trap him. And do you know what they said? It's a fascinating line they give to us. As the story unfolds, they say in chapter six, verses four and five, "There's no charge we can bring against him. The only charge we can bring against him is that he honors the law of God. And if that charge is going to stick, then we can have him convicted." And they set up a scenario where Daniel would have to choose between the law of God and the law of the land.

And you know what happened? He honored the law of God right to the very core of it, 'til the King, himself recognized that this man was too great a man in the nation to ultimately destroy.

We all know the story of Daniel in the lions' den, why he was thrown in there. We forget though that he was thrown in there. We forget why he was thrown in there. He was thrown in because he chose to honor God's law, rather than the laws that were drawing him to bend the knee to earthly philosophies and earthly ideas.

And I bring this message to a close in saying this to you: Daniel meant "One for whom God was the judge." That's what the name Daniel means, "Let God be my judge." And they tried to change his name to Belteshazzar, which meant "One who is a prince of Baal," the false God. He could have been a prince in the palace of a false deity or he could have been a slave, as it were, sold out to God and allowing God to be his judge. What a principle by which to live--that principle of confidence that God alone was going to be his judge.

And I present this man to you at a time in our nation where we are skidding out of control. The signs of the times are ominous. Let me ask you this. Whatever the position may have been that you may hold, even if it is different, I just want to you [sic] to give me a hearing and I speak from my heart on this. Did you ever envision the day that the nation would allow that kind of abortive invasion where a little baby, even in the third trimester is so ravenously killed, that if you ever read one paragraph of description in a medical journal to find out what it is that is done to this third trimester child, I won't even insult your intelligence by describing it for you, and yet, supposedly intellectual and self-respecting and humanitarian people can say they are doing it for the right reasons.

We are living in times where everything is being ravaged. It is going to take a man or a woman like Daniel who believes that as much as the nation *can* be reached and touched, ultimately, nations will go back and forth in the ebb and flow of history, that we know we can't change this nation completely. But I do know one thing that Daniel's message teaches me. I can take responsibility for what I'm going to do with my own life.

And I leave the simple principle with you. Are you going to be allowing God to be your judge or be a prince in the world of ideas that are contradicting you? I present that very simple thought in conclusion. Here was a man who drew the line of resistance, who had a line of dependence and a line of confidence. Do you know what happened as a result? Three pagan kings crossed over from *their* side over onto his side. Three pagan kings prayed to the God of Heaven by the time Daniel's name was through. They tried to change *his* name. He ended up changing theirs. Can it happen? Yes, it can.

Closing Wrap:

John: And right there, we'll end with a very profound thought on today's "Focus on the Family." We've been featuring Dr. Ravi Zacharias and he's been talking about the book of Daniel from the Old Testament and how that relates to our walk as Christians today.

Jim: Uh ... John, it is profound what he said there and I always so appreciate the teaching of Dr. Zacharias. He makes you think.

John: Uh-hm, yes.

Jim: And that's a good thing. I enjoyed his perspective on the book of Daniel and uh ... how Daniel could've enjoyed all the comforts of the king's palace, but instead, he chose a life of discipline that ultimately became a great example to the kings of that nation. I mean, his walk spoke and they watched

him. That's the challenge that faces all of us as Christians today, to be *in* the world, but not *of it*--

John: Hm.

Jim: --and uh ... to avoid falling into worldly habits that compromise our Christian values. It's tough, because it's always pulling on us.

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: And so, for us to walk faithfully and to remember to reach out to others with the love of God and not to be isolated and build a ... a bunker mentality. We need to find the balance there and it is a challenge. Uh ... now one way to meet that challenge is by getting involved in *The Truth Project*. That's something we did here at Focus on the Family. It's a 13-part DVD series that provides a fascinating look at the meaning of truth and the relevance of Christianity in our culture. This is a systematic broad-reaching study, that addresses questions like, what is truth?

John: Hm.

Jim: Who is God? Who is man? And uh ... why did Jesus come to this earth?

John: Hm.

Jim: Those are fair questions.

John: They are; they're the kind of questions people have asked throughout the ages.

Jim: Uh ... they are, John and our teacher for the series is Dr. Del Tackett and he does a great job of tackling those questions and bringing the information down to uh ... what I would call "bite-sized" pieces that we can grasp and understand. And this is a series that's been enjoyed by over 3 million people around the world. We have it in Spanish, French, Arabic. It's amazing uh ... how many people around the world have gravitated toward this content. I'd encourage you to get involved with *The Truth Project*. John, you can give those details about the website--

John: Uh-hm.

Jim: --and learn how your walk, your life will impact those around you.

Closing Voice Track:

John: Uh-hm, yeah, we'll put a link for *The Truth Project*, so you can see all those details, along with a short video from Dr. Zacharias, explaining the critical nature of this effort the dangers of relative truth and that kind of thinking. It's a very insightful video. We'll link over to that and *The Truth Project*, when you stop by www.focusonthefamily.com/radio.

Now *The Truth Project* is a 7-DVD set and includes a study guide and a downloadable leader guide and it's a powerful Christians worldview curriculum that tackles some of the tougher issues of our faith. Now for the first time ever, we're able to make these available to you directly without the previous training requirement. And one participant in the series said, it's very worthwhile. I'd recommend if anyone is interested in going deeper into the Scripture.

Uh ... I've seen Dr. Del Tackett present this material, my sons have. It's good stuff. And you can get your copy when you call 1-800-232-6459; 800, the letter A and the word FAMILY. Now you could also find details at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio.

Our program was provided by Focus on the Family and on behalf of Jim Daly and the entire team here, thanks for listening in. I'm John Fuller, inviting you back tomorrow for the Friday edition of our program. We'll talk about your brothers and sisters in the Middle East--Christians who are being persecuted for their faith--and how we can learn from them and support them. That's next time on "Focus on the Family."

ORPHAN CARE: ACCEPTING THE CALL

Product Type: Broadcast

Most Recent

Air Date: 11-19-2014

Guests: Mrs. Kay Warren, Jim Daly, John Fuller

Transcript

Opening Voice Track:

NOTE: This transcript is not edited to reflect the 11-19-2014 Canada-Only airing.

John: On today's "Focus on the Family," you'll hear about the plight of the orphan from the perspective of the child and also from the perspective of the parent who had to leave that child behind.

Excerpt:

Kay Warren: Mothers say the same thing, whether it's in Malawi or Mozambique or Canada or the United States of England or South Africa or Brazil or Haiti, mothers ask the same question, "Who will take care of my children if I die?"

End of Excerpt

John: Hm ... I can't imagine having to wrestle with that question, but sometimes you could be the answer to that mother's heart cry and we'll explore that with Focus president Jim Daly on today's "Focus on the Family." I'm John Fuller.

Opening Wrap:

Jim: John, that's a unique perspective right there and we'll hear more today from Kay Warren, who has

been working tirelessly for years now to bring awareness to the needs of orphans, particularly those that have been affected by the global HIV/AIDS crisis. She's the cofounder, with her husband, Rick, of Saddleback Church in Southern California. They have three children, one who is now with the Lord and five grandchildren.

Uh ... her mother's heart really comes through in what you'll hear today, which outlines how Kay first caught the vision for orphan care.

John: Hm ... yeah, this message was presented at a Christian Alliance for Orphans Summit in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 2008. Right at the beginning, Kay mentions there are 143 million orphans around the world, which was accurate back then. The figure is actually now about 150 million. And as we begin, let me say that Kay--you hear it in that clip--has deep heartfelt emotion in her voice and that's in response to a slide show about orphaned children.

Body:

Kay: Good morning. It's hard to speak. (Pause) What is the church gonna do about 143 million orphans? I mean, seriously, what is the church gonna do?

It wasn't a question that I asked very often until about six years ago. And one day, I picked up a magazine article sittin' in my living room, comfortable, cushy, good life, good plans. I picked up a ... a magazine that had an article about AIDS in Africa. Didn't care a *thing* about AIDS in Africa. Didn't care a thing about AIDS anywhere, anyplace, any time, didn't matter. Heart very hard, cold, judgmental, apathetic, misinformed, a lot of things.

But that one day I picked up this article and it's as though I saw it for the first time. And when I read this article and I saw that it ... that at the time, they were sayin' 40 million people around the world were infected with HIV. And the pictures that were with this article were graphic, dying people, dying men and women, dying children, too weak to brush the flies away from their faces. And the pictures were so horrific, I couldn't look at them.

And so, I tried to cover my face with my hands to block out the scenes. But there was a box in the middle of that article and it said, "Twelve million children orphaned in Africa due to AIDS." Instead of covering my eyes, this time I threw the magazine down. I *threw it down in horror*, because as I sat in my comfortable living room, a full refrigerator, closets stuffed full of clothes, climate-controlled car (Sniffing), grocery store aisles brimming with more food than I could eat in a year, I realized I didn't know the name of a single orphan.

And I said, "God, what's wrong with *me*? Not what's wrong with the world, but what's wrong with *me*? That I can live in this world and be blind and ignorant and apathetic? (Sniffing) And I began to try to

think, "Okay, God, if I'm really Your disciple, I *claim* to be Your disciple; I claim to be a follower of Yours, Jesus Christ and if I am, *how could I not know this?* And how could I not be touched by this? How could I not know even one?"

And in that process, I went back to a very familiar passage of Scripture. You probably have it memorized, Mark 8:34. Jesus was talking to the crowd, so He calls the crowd and His disciples over to Him and He says to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself; take up his cross and follow Me." And I began to think, what does that mean to me in the 21st century? God, how do I live that out? Help me to understand this.

And for the last six years, I've come to believe that what it means to be a disciple is something very different than what I understood it to mean. I would say it's people who are willing to be surrendered, dangerously surrendered, people who will become *seriously disturbed*. This is the process God has had me on.

The first visit that I made to Africa I met a woman named Giuanna [sp?]. She was actually the first person I ever met that was HIV positive. I thought I had to go to Africa to find somebody who was HIV positive; I was so ignorant. When I met her, she was dying, homeless, living under a tree. She had been kicked out of two villages, burned out of the second one—her home.

And so, she and her husband were living under a tree. And she was about a week away from death, just a bag of bones, skeletal. And I sat there, looking at this dying, homeless woman and thought again, "What has my faith prepared me for? Not this!" I know how to talk to women about where to find the best price of chicken this week. I know how to talk to ... to gals about how to lose that last 10 pounds that they can't lose. I know how to talk to families about their marriages and their children. But God, I don't know what to say to homeless, dying people under trees?!

Where are You, God? Does faith matter in a situation like this? Where ... God, how do I access You? How does this woman access You? God, what does the Good News mean when you're dying under a tree? And you've been burned out of two villages, God, what does the Gospel mean?

Because it was my first visit, I was speechless. All I could do is stare and gulp and feel sick to my stomach. And the woman who was with me who had been many times, showed me how to lean down, how to get down next to this woman on the ground, how to throw my arms around her, how to hold her close, how to reassure her that, while this life had obviously been very hard, there was hope. There was hope there was a life beyond this life, that God loved her. He had not forgotten her, that she mattered to Him.

And I took from that the approach that I have as I go around the world with the hope, hug, weep,

reassurance of the hope of heaven. But on my next trip, this time I was with orphans. And it was with a mom, who said, "You know what? I'm HIV positive. And my husband was unfaithful to me and he is HIV positive and his mistress is HIV positive. And they have an HIV positive baby. And my husband wants to bring her into our home and live with us."

And now she's, dying, this woman that I'm talking to. And I said to her, "How ... I'm going back to my country. What do I tell people how to pray for you?" I figured she'd say, "Pray that I have medicine. Pray that somebody will give me money."

But her response to me when I said, "Tell me how I can tell the women in my church to pray for you," she said, "Pray for my children. What is going to happen to my children when I die? Because nobody is going to want to take care of them. They know I'm dying of AIDS and nobody is gonna want my children."

And she became the first of so many mothers that I have heard around the world. Mothers say the same thing, whether it's in Malawi, or Mozambique or Canada or the United States or England or South Africa or Brazil or Haiti, mothers ask the same question: Who will take care of my children when I die? Does the church have an answer? Does your church have an answer to that question?

And I went from Flora's house to what they call in the world of NGOs, a "child-headed household." If that's not the most clinical title I don't know what is. It just means orphans kids livin' together. And I met John, who was 15, taking care of his 11-year-old brother and his 3-year-old little sister, in a little mud hut, not much bigger than this. And they had ... it was in a very rural area and they hadn't seen very many white people. And with my fair skin and light hair, I looked dead (Laughter).

And so, they very soberly and somberly took me into their little tiny mud hut and showed me the few blankets and a dented cooking pot and that's it. That's what they owned in this world. And as I talked to them and the little 3-year-old sister finally would let me hold her and as I sat on the porch of their little mud hut, I wanted to just lie down on the ground and scream and sob and wail on their behalf.

And I held in the emotion until I left and so I sat on that porch, holding the 3-year-old little girl. And in my spirit, crying out to God, saying, "God, where's the mommy and the daddy? Where's the daddy who will swing her in the air, who will pray with her, who will chase her through the yard, who will stand next to her proudly on the day that she is married? God, where is the mommy who, when she wakes up in the night, will come cuddle her, will sing her a lullaby, will hold her and reassure her that the monsters won't get her? Where is the mommy who will teach her how to be a young woman, who will teach her how to prepare for marriage, who will teach her how to be a mom? God, where are they? These

brothers will do the best they can, but they cannot do what a mom and a dad can do. God, what is Your answer?

And as I've learned through the years, as it has all become very personal, very real—real names, real faces, *real stories, real people*—that these that I meet are only a microcosm. That story of Flora and her husband, bringing AIDS into their home and her having to cry out, "What will happen to my children when I die," she represents millions and millions of mothers, who go to sleep at night, asking, "Who will care for my children?"

And John and his brother and little Nincindy, they represent millions and millions and millions and millions and millions and millions and millions of children on their own.

And I have to say, "God, what is it in us that is so broken, that we will not move out *en masse*? What is our answer as the church? Somewhere there is within us a lack of surrender. We are so consumed by our own lives, by our own busyness, by our own schedule, by our own agenda, by our own problems, to think of denying ourselves as Jesus said, "If you're gonna be My follower," to think of denying ourselves to the point that we would say, "God, I choose Your way, not mine. I choose Your kingdom over my kingdom," is not a common response in *my life*. It's not a common response in *my church* and I have a really strong feeling that it's probably not a very common response in your church or in ... even in *your life*. Where are we willing to surrender, so that John is not by himself, So that Flora's children are not turned in ... on to the street, are not left as orphans?

What is it that disturbs you? Jesus said, "If you're really My disciple, you'll be willing to take up the cross." A cross in those days meant, you took it up because you were going to die. They *got it*. They understand that to really be a disciple of Christ meant in some way, you were gonna pay a price, that could be the actual giving of your life.

Jesus left heaven because He was disturbed. He saw the fact that there was no hope for us and He left the comfort of heaven and He came to be with us and to suffer with us and to carry our pain for us. And He says, "If you're gonna be Mine, you will do exactly the same thing. You will become so disturbed. I am a seriously and permanently disturbed woman.

Program Note:

John: You're listening to Kay Warren on today's "Focus on the Family." And in a few minutes, you'll hear how this heart for the orphan has changed her dramatically in so many ways. Get a CD of this program with additional content when you call 800-A-FAMILY; 800-232-6459. Or get the instant download at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio. Let's return now to Kay Warren on today's "Focus on the Family."

End of Program Note

Kay Warren: Six years ago, I became a seriously, permanently disturbed woman. This is what it will take for orphans, for the church to respond. The church must become not just surrendered with this, "God, yes, whatever," but so disturbed that we are compelled. *We must act*. It no longer becomes optional. It no longer becomes something that we do if we have time, if we can fit into our schedule, if we can rearrange things. No, if you are going to be His, you will be willing to pay whatever price it costs. You will die if that's what He asks.

What is it that seriously disturbs you? Some of you are here because you are already involved in orphan care and looking for ways. Many of you have adopted or do foster care. Some of you may be here, sort of on the fringes, just ... you're here because you're sort of interested. And for those who are coming here just because you're sort of interested, I'm telling you that to *be a disciple*, to be a *follower of Jesus Christ*, you must become *disturbed*, seriously disturbed, to the point that you will say, "God, whatever. I'm Yours."

I was in Ukraine last year and in an orphanage in Russia last year. And here in this orphanage in Saint Petersburg, there were children who were born to HIV-positive mothers. And it was decided that if you were born to an HIV-positive mother, they ... even though there are tests that can determine if you are HIV positive very early now ... the child, they still kept them separated. And there was a little 4-year-old boy, who ha ... was very severely disabled. And he was positive and nobody holds him. (Choking with emotion)

And I so desperately wanted to hold him. And so, I picked him up out of his crib (Choking with emotion), but he wouldn't let me hold him, because he's not used to it. And so, he just ... he was so uncomfortable in my lap and his body was spastic anyway. And he ... he moved and he turned and he ... he was ... began to cry and he was so uncomfortable being held. So, I put him back in his crib and just um ... leaned over it for a long time, holding his hand. And then he was fine. (Emotion)

I'm not the same person I was six years ago. I have a whole different set of values; a whole different set of things *matter* to me. I'm not very much fun at dinner parties any more. (Laughter) Can you believe it? (Laughter) 'Cause what I want to talk about, I don't want to talk about trivialities. I'm so *bored* with small talk. I'm so *bored* with what's happening on "American Idol" and "Dancing with the Stars" and "Next Model" and (Applause) I'm bored with all of that. I'm bored with it. It's so meaningless!

What I want to talk about is death and dying (Chuckling) and HIV and orphans and clean water and the sick and the homeless. I want to talk about the least and the last and the lost. I want to talk about what is the church ... what is the church gonna do about all those things?

As the wife of the man who wrote *The Purpose Driven Life*, you'd think I'd always know my purpose. But I just have to tell ya, sometimes I don't. (Laughter) And on those days when I'm not really sure, I go back to Colossians, Colossians 1:15. It says that Jesus was the visible image of the invisible God.

God kept tellin' us what He was like. All through the Old Testament, He said, "I care about the children." And we could say, "Sure You do; sure You do." But then Jesus was here and then Jesus said, "If you so much as harm one of these little ones, just tie a millstone around your neck and be thrown in the sea if you dare hurt one of these little ones. And as He's holding a child and He's speaking with that strong voice to all those around, suddenly you go, "Ah-ha; He means it." (Laughing) He means it. This is what it means for God to care.

When God said, "I care about the poor, when I care about those who are marginalized, those who are on the edges" and then Jesus was with a woman caught in adultery. And instead of saying, "Yes, let Me be the first one to pick up the stone and whack her with it," He said instead, "Woman your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more."

And we begin to go, "Oh, God, have mercy!" God is merciful. God really is just. He cares. He has forgiveness. Jesus made the invisible God visible to us. Now that is our task, every day. That is your job today, when you leave here, is to make the invisible God visible. How would Flora ever know that there would be people that would care about her children unless there was somebody there saying, "Flora, I care and I'm gonna make sure that your children have a place to go when you die." How would John know that God had not forgotten him and his brother and his sister in their grief, in their aloneness, unless there is a church member, somebody who comes in and says, "You're part of us now. You're not alone. You're not on your own. You're a part of us." How would that little boy ... how would he ever know (Emotion) that God has not abandoned him, unless there is somebody who comes in, who scoops him up. How will they know, unless surrendered, disturbed disciples of Jesus Christ say, "I care. I will make Him visible. I will make Him known." May I pray for us?

Father, in many ways, this is the choir. These are folks who ... many of whom are already very, very surrendered and disturbed. But God, may we take that message and make sure it's a part of every day? That we would call Your church to respond as only followers of Christ can do?

God, may we truly create seats at our table. Would You show us how to make You visible in this world that does not understand You? We have done such a poor job of communicating who You are and what You care about. Help us, God by the ... the lives that we live, by the surrendered, disturbed lives that we live. May we make You clear, not just to a watching world, but to the millions and millions and

millions and millions and millions of children who need a home, who need that radical hospitality of a home and a place and a family. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Audience: (Applause)

Closing Wrap:

John: Hm ... with that call to us, the church, we come to the end of a presentation, a very moving presentation from Kay Warren on "Focus on the Family."

Jim: Uh ... John, Kay's message is so heartfelt and you can feel it right through the microphones. I uh ... I so appreciate the fact that she allowed the Lord to open her eyes to a problem, um ... the problem being the orphans of the world and that she jumped into it with both feet. She didn't hesitate. She saw the need and said, yes.

And we are here to be the hands and feet of Christ to a hurting world and Kay is an excellent example of that passion and really, one of the reasons we wanted to air her comments today. It does remind me of a movie we have coming up here in the Spring of 2014. We're aiming for March and it's called *Drop Box*. It's about a pastor in Seoul, South Korea, who set up literally a drop box to rescue babies who were abandoned. And uh ... it is a powerful story and I'm looking forward to you seeing that in March.

John: Yeah, the ... *The Drop Box* is a warm bin that is at his church, at Pastor Lee's church. It's set up so that mothers, mostly those who have disabled babies and don't want to or can't care for them, to safely give them up to someone who will care for them, to do so without being seen. And Pastor Lee found himself taking in baby after baby. He now has an orphanage.

Jim: Ah, it's ... it's such an example of being the hands and feet of Jesus. It illustrates the sanctity of all human life and that's one reason why "Focus on the Family" is helping uh ... to partner and promote *The Drop Box* movie, so that we can get this message out to the world. And you'll be hearing more about it in the coming months.

Focus on the Family is also making, I think, big strides in this area through Wait No More. Just in the U.S., we have 100,000 children waiting for families. That's a big number. Uh ... but you know what? It's down from a few years ago, from about 127,000. Uh ... we've been able, through the effort of pastors and Focus on the Family and State Departments of Family Services, to work together, we've been able to recruit about 3,000 families to initiate the process of adoption and foster care. I am really proud of that, because I think this is right where the Lord wants His church to be, with broken and hurting people.

We'd love to have you partner with us in this effort. A gift of \$100 can help find a loving family for a child in foster care. And if you can make that a monthly donation, um ... you'll be helping 12 children a year. I hope that puts a smile on your face. I know it does for Jean and for me. When you become a monthly donor, a Friend of the Family as we call you, we want to say thank you by offering you some gifts that will help your family. And uh ... we'll do that about every three months, just to remind you of our appreciation for you. We treasure your partnership, as we do all we can to help orphans in North America find their forever family.

Closing Voice Track:

John: Oh, it really is a win-win-formula when you get involved and it just takes a quick phone call to 1-800-232-6459; 800, the letter A and the word FAMILY. You can also drop a check in the mail to Focus on the Family, 8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80920. Or donate at www.focusonthefamily.com/radio where you'll find additional information about local Wait No More events, that movie *The Drop Box* and books by today's speaker, Kay Warren.

Our program was provided by Focus on the Family and on behalf of Jim Daly and the entire team, thanks for listening in. I'm John Fuller, inviting you back next time,. You'll learn how to get your children unplugged from their gadgets and tuned into your family as we share trusted advice and encouragement to help you and your family thrive.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF YOUR FAITH? I-II

Product Type: Broadcast

Most Recent

Air Date: 02-19-2016

Guests: **Pastor Andy Stanley**, Jim Daly, John Fuller

Transcript 1

Opening Voice Track:

John Fuller: You might have had a time with God when you felt He was very close to you, but as we'll hear from pastor Andy Stanley there needs to be more to your faith than that one experience:

Excerpt:

Andy Stanley: "God often uses moments to launch faith but those moments were never designed to be the foundation of our faith. Those moments often launch our faith but never ever, as we're going to see, are we to lean our faith in God up against those moments, because those moments come and those moments go."

End Excerpt

John: You'll discover a stronger foundation for your faith on today's "Focus on the Family" with Focus president, Jim Daly, and I'm John Fuller.

Opening Wrap:

Jim Daly: I heard this message give this message a couple of years ago and I was riveted and I knew that we just had to share it with you. This is one of those foundational messages that every Christian needs to hear so that your faith will be strong enough to weather the stormy times that come to all of us. And John, let's just get right to it.

John: Alright. Well, here's pastor, Andy Stanley, of Northpoint Ministries on today's "Focus on the

Family."

Body:

Andy Stanley: We're going to talk about the difference between faith and hope and luck. I ... I want to try to help unravel the mystery of this thing that all of us experience. And ... and you may experience this as a Christian or you may be from another religious background, but this whole thing of, you have belief in God and you have faith in God. And in your mind or in your way of thinking, there are some cause and effect relationships between what you do and what God should do. Uh ... if you grew up in a Christian home, you were taught, you know, you ask God and God answers prayers. And you try to get Him to say yes. And maybe you were taught, if you have enough *faith*, you can get God to say yes. And if you get a lot of faith, you'll get God to do stuff. And then you hear people tell these amazing stories of, you know, I lost my job on Monday, but then I fasted and prayed on Tuesday and on Wednesday, um ... the guy came and gave me the whole company, you know (Laughter). It's like, wow! You know! Or you know, "he broke up with me, but then you know, he apologized and now we're happily married." And you hear these stories and people ... and ...and prayer is part of the equation and faith is part of the equation. But it doesn't ever quite work out that way for you. And then if you're honest and you kind of poke around behind some of those old ... other stories, you find out didn't really work out all that well for them either, you know, sometimes.

So, we're going to talk about what is that? And ... and how does that work? And ... and maybe how do you work it and how do you get it to work? And ... and how, you know, how does faith impact God? And what's the difference between hoping for something and being able to say, "God, I trust You to do this." And ... and if you've been around a lot of Christians, you've heard things like that. "We're just trusting' God for that." And you're thinking', "What does that mean? And how do you know God's going to do it?" And then you meet people that have all this incredible faith and you think, "I ... boy, I'd like to be like that."

I want to talk specifically about what you lean your faith against, okay or what you prop your faith up on or another way of thinking' about it is, what def.... what is the foundation of your faith or your belief system?

Now the ... the thing that would probably make that a more intriguing conversation um ... is not so much to talk about what the foundation is, but maybe to talk about what your foundation has been or what it was. And so, what I want to do for a few minutes is kind of turn the corner. And I want to talk to those of you who have lost faith or who have abandoned your faith. Because a discussion about losing faith or abandoning our faith is really the discussion that helps us understand how important it is and why it's important to have the right thing to lean our faith against to begin with.

Because if you're a person who has lost faith or has abandoned your faith or maybe you're here listening to this message because you're in the process of losing it and you feel like the world ... your world's kind of coming apart and you don't know what to say. You don't know how to pray. You don't know what you can expect from God. You're not even sure there is a God.

Then what's happened is, whatever you had been leaning your faith against, it has moved. And so, consequently, when the foundation or the thing you lean your faith against moves, then your faith begins to crash. And perhaps your faith has crashed. Or perhaps your faith is crashing. And so, I want to talk about why that happens, because in discovering why that happens, we're going to discover today why it's so important to understand the right foundation for faith.

Now here's my observation and being a pastor for a long time and talking to lots and lots of people, when I meet people who say they've lost their faith or they've abandoned their faith or they've ... you know, they just don't know what to believe or to think anymore, generally it's because of two things. Lifestyle decisions and unexplainable circumstances; that lifestyle decisions and unexplainable circumstances do more to erode faith and kind of chip away at what was probably an insecure foundation to begin with, than anything else. Let me try to illustrate that for you.

Perhaps you were raised in a home, maybe a Christian home or some kind of religious home, where you were taught that cheating and being dishonest was a bad thing and so, you grew up as a child, thinking that's right. Cheating and being dishonest is a bad thing. And even though you cheated and even though you were dishonest, you still believed it was a bad thing. It was part of your belief system. And that was fine when you were in high school and you know, middle school.

But then you move to the big city and you got a job and you became a part of a company and an industry where cheating and being dishonest was a business practice. And it wasn't super overt, but as you got involved in this company or this ... this industry, you realized that being a little bit dishonest and not exactly disclosing everything was just how business was done. And now you had this dilemma on the inside, because you'd been raised to believe, well, this is wrong. But you looked around the vicinity of the company and the office and it didn't seem to be bothering anybody else.

So now you had a real dilemma and you had three choices. I can either work here and feel guilty all the time. I can quit my job. That's not a good option. Or maybe what I've always believed isn't true. Maybe in an environment like this, being a little dishonest and cheating a little bit isn't really bad. Maybe I'm being too hard on myself. Maybe my conscience is a little bit too wired.

And over time and all of us have experienced this, all ... over time because of a lifestyle decision—whether it's a job decision or whatever—we begin to change what we believe, not because of great research, not because God revealed to us that, "You've been wrong," you know. We begin to change what we believe because of a lifestyle decision. I've decided to stay in this company. I've decided to be a part of this company. I don't want to feel guilty about what I'm doing. And so, I've decided like everybody else around me, that you know what? What we're doing really isn't bad. And suddenly, your belief system or your faith in something has shifted.

And ... and over time, you will begin to adapt a different lifestyle, which impacts your belief system, not because of research, but because of the people you're around, because of culture. This happens to us to some extent, all the time. All of us feel those pressures.

But here ... here's my point. What slowly happens is, we change the way we behave and then, we change the way we believe, as if to say, what we used to believe was wrong, but we don't quit believing, because what we believe was wrong. We quit believing because we behaved in a different way. And our new behavior impacts the way that we believe.

John: Some great observations about how we live; how we think and behave and that's pastor Andy Stanley on "Focus on the Family." Now this reminder, you can get a CD of the program with extra content or if you'd prefer a DVD of the entire series by Andy about faith when you call 800- A- FAMILY or at get details at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio. Let's go ahead and return now to more insights from Andy Stanley on "Focus on the Family."

The other thing that chips away at ... at our faith oftentimes is not only lifestyle decisions, but unexplainable circumstances. That's the second thing I mentioned. By that I mean this. You were raised to believe that God would never ... and then it seemed like God did anyway.

You were raised to believe that God will always ... but then it seems that God didn't. You were raised to believe that if you do A, B, and C, you can expect God and trust God to do D, E and F. And so, you have done A, B, and C consistently and God hasn't done D, E or F. And all of a sudden, there is a life circumstance that doesn't line up with your thinking about God and your faith is shattered.

This happens all the time. And you look around for a job and God hasn't answered your prayer. And you fasted and prayed. You've done all the things people told you to do. Some of you are back in church, trying' to get in good with God, because you're not sure how God works, but you're thinking' church is a part of it. And you don't even like church and you ... you're having' a hard time even paying' attention right now, but you're hoping. God sees you in here (Laughter) and God's going, "Oh, look, look, look. She's in church. Okay, put a check. She's got three checks and four X's, but maybe she

... "you know.

But you're thinking' that ... that somehow you've got to kind of win God's favor and get ... get on God's side. And you don't know how that works. And you've begun to lose faith, because God isn't actin' the way you think God ought to act. And many people, I'll be every one of you in this room, knows someone or is someone who said, "You know what? My faith took a big hit. My faith got a big ding, when I expected or trusted God to do something', because somebody told me that's what God was like and God didn't do it. And now I don't know what to believe."

The two things again that erode faith faster than anything else are lifestyle decisions that eventually impact what we believe and unexplainable circumstances, where God doesn't seem to do what we think God ought to do.

Now here's what both of those scenarios and there's lot of spinoff both of those, here's what both of those things have in common. For the purpose of this series, we're going to call that "circumstantial faith." Circumstantial faith is this: I'm trusting God and I'm believing in God, based on my ability to find God in my circumstances." And when you were 12-years-old, living at home in whatever town that was and Mom and Dad said, you know, this is how you're supposed to behave in a relationship with a young man or a young woman, you believed that and it worked for you and you held onto that. Then when you moved to the big city and that didn't seem to be so practical anymore and nobody else was behaving that way, you abandoned that based on what? Your circumstances. It was circumstantial faith.

You always thought that God would protect you if you did certain things. It seems like God's not protecting you. You look around your circumstances. You don't feel protected and you're not sure you believe in God anymore. Why? You have circumstantial faith.

And to some extent, all of us have an element of circumstantial faith. That is, our beliefs about God and our faith in God, whether weak or strong, is impacted by what we see, by what we experience, what the people around us do.

The problem is, circumstantial faith is always very, very fragile, because I don't know if you have recognized this or not, life is not consistent. There is randomness to life. Seemingly, there is randomness to God. There is randomness to the events of life. And every time you think you have figured out the formula, you know, two prayers, read my Bible and go to church, two prayer ... I got the formula, gee ... gee, you know. I've got ... I've got it worked out.

You know, every time we think we've got it figured out, something' doesn't work out and we look around

our circumstances and say, "What's wrong with God? Or what's wrong with me?" That's called circumstantial faith and it's always very fragile.

The ... the reason it's fragile and you're probably already kind of figuring' this out, the reason it's fragile, one reason is because we're not very good at interpreting events anyway, okay? I mean, the problem with circumstantial faith is, I look in the vicinity of this week or this month and go, "Well, since this happened and since the job didn't work out, since he never called me back and since my son hasn't returned, maybe God doesn't love me." I'm looking' at my circumstances. But we're bad at interpreting events anyway.

Um ... you know, the classic case is, if you dropped into me interfacing with one of my kids and asked them, "Does your daddy love you?" there would be times when my kids would probably look at you and say, "No, he doesn't love me." "Well, why?" "He's making' me go to that dentist." (Laughter) You know? And of course, as an adult, you're going, "Well, actually that is evidence that he does love you." But if you ask my kids, or if you'd asked me as a kid, I'd say no. That's evidence that he hates me, okay? Because it hurt last time; it's going to hurt this time. Why would somebody who loves me, take me and sit me in a chair, put things in my mouth and then walk out of the room and just let them have their way? I mean, that's not evidence of a father's love. That's some kind of weirdness. He probably needs counseling.

So, the thing is (Laughter) we know from personal experience, that at times in our life, we have been very, very bad at interpreting circumstances. Chances are you had an event in your life that in the moment, you thought it was terrible. Three years later, you look back and you say, "I am so glad that happened." Well, wait a minute. Was it good or was it bad? Well, ultimately it was good, but it seemed like it was bad. Yeah, but if you had evaluated God's love for you in the moment when it seemed bad, you would've been wrong. But that's the problem with circumstantial faith. It's always very, very fragile and we're not good at interpreting circumstances. In fact, we're ... we're not good at that at all.

The other thing that makes us bad at interpreting circumstance is that our time frame isn't long enough, right? I mean, if something' happens on Monday and you pray on Tuesday, you know, you'll give God Wednesday, but by Thursday, something needs to be going' on, right? (Laughter) Okay, God, I'm going to be gracious person; I'm going to give You two weeks to work this out, right? Our time frame is so short and when we ... now this is so important, when we evaluate God's faithfulness, when we evaluate God's intervention in a time frame that's short enough to suit us, but that doesn't suit Him, we often conclude something's wrong with God. I pulled the lever and things aren't linin' up. And I thought I knew how to do this. I thought God always ... I thought God never...

One of the um ... most fascinating stories in the Bible, it's one of the longest stories about a person in the whole Bible, in fact, it might be the longest, is the story of Joseph. Joseph was the key to getting the nation of Israel into Egypt. And in Egypt they were persecuted and then Moses and all that famous part of the story.

But Joseph was a critical element and when you read his story, it's so fascinating. For 15 years, 15 years God didn't do anything for Joseph and Joseph remained faithful. And when you read the story, it's very evident as an outsider, that God is up to something. But when you're with Joseph and you're in the story, there's no evidence that God is up to anything. And time after time after time, Joseph continued to believe God, not based on his circumstances, but based on something entirely different that we'll talk about in just a minute.

And when you read the story, you go, "Look what God did!" And you go, "Yeah, but what if at any point in the story, Joseph had said, 'You know what? Clearly this ain't working'. Clearly there's not a God and if there is a God, He doesn't love me.'" But see, fortunately, he understood the time frame of God is oftentimes not the one that lines up with our timeframe.

So, one of the things that makes circumstantial faith so fragile is, we don't interpret events very well. We don't know what God's up to half the time. And our time frame is too short. And then, the other things is and ... and maybe you can relate to this, maybe not. We ... we don't often interpret the voice of God very well. Every once in awhile, you run into somebody or maybe you are again, one of those "somebodies" that hears from God. And somebody says, "You know, well, God told me to ..." And "God showed me that I need to ..." And "God led me out of ..." And ... and they just ... I ... I listen to those people sometimes and think, "Wow! I ... I think I wish God would speak to me that much, but that's a lot of accountability. Maybe not. I'd rather go with a hunch, you know. Then I could say, "I didn't know. I thought it ... (Laughter) I ... I misunderstood, you know. (Laughter)

But you ... you've met people and ... and I don't doubt that God speaks to people. I'm not sayin' that at all. But the problem is, when you ... when you are sure God has spoken to you and then God doesn't do what you think God's promised you to... promised to do, the tendency is to go, "Well, I don't know if I can trust God anymore." Well, maybe, maybe you misunderstood God. I mean, Sandra misunderstands me sometimes. I misunderstand her. I misunderstand my kids. They misunderstand me. If we kind of have that thing going' on between human beings that we can see and get clarification, is it possible that maybe we misunderstand God? I think the answer is absolutely yes.

But, if your faith is leaning upon your ability to always hear from God and always get it right the first time, that's fragile faith. That's circumstantial faith. That is, "I'm trusting God, because I'm trusting in... in the sphere of my environment and my experience alone.

John: Pastor Andy Stanley on today's "Focus on the Family" and we have the CD of this presentation with extra content and a DVD of five-part series by Andy about faith and cantell you more when you call 800-A-FAMILY, or you'll find those resources and more at FocusontheFamily.com/radio. And now more from pastor Andy Stanley as "Focus on the Family" continues.

Andy: For many of us, it's true that God will oftentimes use an event or a set of circumstances to launch our faith. Now this sounds like I'm contradicting myself, so follow me carefully. You're goin' along. Life's great. You're not really interested in God. You know, it's fine if there's a God. You don't care; you're busy. You're making' a living, you know, trying' to get life goin', get your kids through school, whatever.

And then somebody invited you to church and you're just sorta like, whatever, you know. They promised me lunch. And you show up and the music starts, you know, how the music starts. And then there's a ... a message.

And all of a sudden, you're kind of overwhelmed with this emotion and you lookback to that moment and you would say, "You know what? I just feel like God met me there." We hear those stories all the time at baptism. Or maybe you're goin' through a real tough time. And one night you turn out the lights and got on your knees beside your bed. And you don't know that you've ever done that or you don't remember when the last time you did that was. And you started callin' out to God out loud, saying, "God, I don't know if You're there, but if You're there, I need You." And in that moment, something happened and you look back to that moment and you say, "Wow! That's when it started for me. That's when God became real. That event launched my faith. That event, that God moment, was like the catalyst to my faith." Or maybe it was an answer to prayer.

Now here's my point. God often uses moments to launch faith. *But those moments were never designed to be the foundation of our faith.* Those moments often launch our faith, but never, ever, as we're gonna see, are we to lean our faith in God up against those moments, because those moments come and those moments go. And sometimes God miraculously answers prayers and sometimes He seems to be silent. And sometimes He works within our short timeframe and sometimes it seems like He ignores our timeframe. We're lookin' at our watch. He's lookin' at the calendar, right?

So, the thing is, we have to be careful going forward and ... and this ... we're about to narrow this down a little bit. Your confidence in your faith is resting against something.

If it is circumstantial, it is fragile and eventually, it will fail and here's why. Because the sorrows of life and the tragedies of life will a ... a ... eventually cause there to be so many random experiences in your life that don't make sense, you will no longer feel like you can put your confidence in or trust this.

At the same time, the pleasures of life, the pleasures of life will eventually cause almost every single element of your belief system to become inconvenient. In order to continue believing, you're gonna have to give up some pleasure. And at the end of the day, if your faith is purely circumstantial, you will opt for pleasure over faith every single time. And you will adjust your belief system to match your lifestyle, which isn't necessarily a problem, except for this.

It means that what you have believed, really probably isn't worth believing and that what you believe today, probably isn't gonna be what you believe tomorrow. And none of that's a problem, until you come to a place in life when you really, really, really, really need somethin' to be able to lean on. And if all you have is circumstantial faith—faith based on what I can see around me, experience around me, what I believe, what I expect God to do—eventually that will not hold you up.

Now here's one of the reasons. I love bein' a Christian. And here's one of the reasons that, you know, the more I read, the more I explore, the more I travel, the more I talk to people, the ... the more I come back and I'm just grateful to the point of bein' emotional about my faith in Christ and that's this. That unlike current day philosophies and neat philosophers and all kind of the cool stuff that's goin' on today that's fun to read about unlike many other ... or really all other world religions, the foundation of Christianity is not an experience.

The foundation of Christianity is not my ability to make the world make sense. The foundation of Christianity is not an ... an event with God. It's not an answered prayer. It's none of those things that are oftentimes the catalyst of our faith.

The foundation, the thing that we lean Christianity on, the thing that we lean on as Christians is so different than any other thing. It's the thing that makes Christianity stand out and it's the reason I believe, that some of you are coming back to church, because you spent a season of your life trying to prop your belief system up and prop your worldview up on something that worked for awhile. But you ... you're smart enough to know that you keep adapting your belief system to follow your behavior and adapting your belief system to follow your behavior and at some point in life, you look up at the sky and you realize, I don't believe in anything. I believe in me and I'm not enough. And maybe you're back, because you're hoping there's more to life than that.

And here's some great news. There is. Now I just want to read one verse to you today.

It's found in Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 14... The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were Jewish. They were Jewish Christians and they had no real good reason to continue following Jesus, because life was really bad for them. They lost their jobs. They lost their place in the ... in society. Um ... they were told that Jesus was gonna come back soon. So, in other words, I don't mean like in a few years. They were told like, don't even sit down. He's gonna be back in a minute, okay?

They ... they believed he was comin' back so soon, they sold all of their things and gave it all away, 'cause they didn't think they were gonna need anything, because Jesus was coming back. Now Jesus didn't say that. In fact, Jesus said, "I want you to go tell everybody in the whole world about Me; then I'll come back." They missed that part. They just thought He was coming back in a minute.

So, when He didn't come back, they were losin' faith. And so, the writer of Hebrews writes these Jewish Christians and he's pleading with them, "Don't give up your faith. Don't abandon Christianity. Don't abandon Jesus just because of your "circumstances." In other words, don't make the mistake of propping up your faithfulness on what you can see and those, you know, God moments that have ... happen every once in a while.

And then in this verse, he gives us in no unmistakable terms, the foundation of our faith and this sets Christianity apart from everything else. And you know what? This is the only place ... this is the only place to prop up your worldview and to prop up your belief system. This is the foundation of faith, verse 14, Hebrews 4:14. I'm gonna kind of pick through this verse real quickly for ya.

He says, "Therefore," and now he reviews everything he's said so far in these four chapters so far. "Therefore, since we have (present tense, right now), we have a great high priest, who has (past tense) ... has gone through the heavens." And that's a summary statement for Jesus' entire ministry and His whole life. If you read the other parts of Hebrews, that becomes clear.

He says, "Since we right now have this high priest, who in the past"... a few years ago from their perspective ... a few years ago showed up on the earth, walked around, performed miracles um ... claimed to be the Son of God, validated that through His life and miracles, Who died on the cross, Who rose from the dead and went to be with the Father.

He said, "Since, you know, we right now have a high priest who did all of that, Jesus, the Son of God," and then listen to what he says next. "Let us hold firmly," as in right now. "Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." Now let me put all that together and here's the answer to the question, "What is the foundation of our faith?"

He was saying to them, "Guys, I know it's tough. And I know it ain't working out and I know Jesus didn't show up. And I know you're having' a hard time being' a Christian in a primarily Jewish culture, where they're pretty hostile right now. I know that God's not answering your prayers. And I know your children aren't buying into it. I know things are tough. But don't quit believing.

"Why? Well, not based on what you see around you. Don't quit believing, because listen to what we have. We have in history a person who showed up and walked this earth as one of us, who was seen, who was touched, who was loved, who spoke, who performed miracles, who died on the cross in front of all of us, who was raised from the dead and seen by over 500 people and who claim to have a unique relationship with God and who claims to be the one who represents us to God that's who we have, and since we right now, currently have that, that's why we don't give up believing. In other words, the foundation of our faith is a person, the foundation of our faith is not an experience, the foundation of our faith is not an answer to prayer. The foundation of our faith is a person, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Closing Wrap:

John: Well what a great message and wise words from pastor, Andy Stanley. And that's a presentation he gave to his church, Northpoint Community in the Atlanta, Georgia, area and you'll hear more on the next "Focus on the Family" about how to make Jesus Christ the foundation for your faith.

Jim: As I said at the top of the program John, when I first hear this program from Andy Stanley I thought I have got to share this with our listeners having a firm foundation is so critical to leading a godly life and it's what will get you through those hard times and I especially think it's important to share this message with our teens and young adults who can you know, be so wobbly in their faith during those years.

John: Yeah, it's a time of testing life of kind of spreading wings and going off and learning life and we pray they'll be surrounded by people and circumstance to bolster them but the reality is that they're going to be challenged in their beliefs.

Jim: Well, and I know you've seen this first hand John with four kids in their 20's now an you know part of our mission here at Focus on the Family is to help young adults build a strong marriage we want them to have that desire and having a firm faith like Andy Stanley is talking about is a necessary foundation for that. That's why we're here. What we're sharing with you on the air with you today and tomorrow is just a small segment of a five-part DVD series from Andy Stanley called "*Faith, Hope, and Luck: Discover What You Can Expect From God*" and we're so eager to get it into your hands. We'd like to send it to you for a donation of any amount as you support the work we're doing here at Focus on the Family.

Closing Voice Track:

John: You can call and make a contribution our number is 800 -232-6459, or you can find the series and donate at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio . Our program was provided by Focus on the Family and on behalf of Jim Daly, I'm John Fuller thanking you for listening and inviting you back tomorrow. Andy shares how God will show up when hard times come.

Excerpt:

Andy Stanley: "The strength of God is a lesson you will never ever forget and God says, let me tell you what, sometimes I'm going to take the pressure of and sometimes I'm going the intervene in your circumstance, but I promise every single time to give you the grace, the strength, the power to endure."

End of Excerpt:

John: That's tomorrow as we once again help you and your family thrive.

Transcript 2

Opening Voice Track:

John Fuller: For many of us, our faith can be just a little too dependent on our circumstances. Here's pastor Andy Stanley:

Excerpt:

Andy Stanley: "You were raised to believe that if you do *A, B, and C*, you can expect God and trust God to do *D, E and F*. And so, you have done *A, B, and C* consistently and God hasn't done *D, E or F*. And all of a sudden, there is a life circumstance that doesn't line up with your thinking about God and your faith is shattered."

End of Excerpt

John: You'll hear how to have a faith that can withstand any storm on today's "Focus on the Family" with Focus president, Jim Daly.

Opening Wrap:

Jim Daly: John we started a fascinating two-part look at faith last time and let me tell you if you missed part one I'd highly recommend that you request a CD or the audio download or get the entire five-session series which we have on DVD; and we're only able to share the highlights here on the radio.

There is so much great content.

John: Yeah, you can learn more about the DVD, the CD, the download. All of that at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio or when you call 800-A-FAMILY.

Jim: Last time Andy talked about how fragile our faith can be, especially if it's based on our circumstances. Today we'll hear what the true foundation of our faith should be so let's get right to it John.

John: Alright, here's pastor Andy Stanley of Northpoint Ministries and we're going to roll back just a little bit to help you with the context on today's "Focus on the Family."

Body:

Andy Stanley: We have in history, a person who showed up and walked this earth as one of us, who was seen, who was touched, who was loved, who spoke, who performed miracles, who died on the cross in front of all of us, who was raised from the dead and seen by over 500 people, who claimed to have a unique relationship with God and who claims to be the one who represents us to God. That's who we have. And since we right now currently have that, that's why we don't give up believing."

In other words, the foundation of our faith is a person. The foundation of our faith is not an experience. The foundation of our faith is not an answer to prayer. The foundation of our faith is a person, Jesus Christ, the Lord.

And the reason that we believe when things are good and believe when things are bad is not because things are good or things are bad and not because we can make sense out of life and not because we can answer every question. The reason we believe is because 2,000 years ago ... and here's the thing that sets Christianity apart from your current philosophies and your pop religion and your pop psychology and all the other religions of the world.

Two thousand years ago, something happened and the foundation of Christianity is something that happened in history. We believe because of something that happened years ago, not because of our ability to interpret circumstances right now. We have a Savior Who is the great high priest, Jesus Christ, Who passed through heaven and sits at the right hand of our heavenly Father.

In other words, the foundation of your faith is not what you can see and not what you experience. This is why every once in awhile, you ... you meet somebody and they had extraordinary faith. And you're thinkin', "How can you continue to believe when this happened to you? And how can you continue to believe when it didn't work out? And how can you continue to believe?" And you're looking at their circumstances, sayin', "How can you continue to have that much faith?"

And they would say, "It's ... well, simple, because I don't have circumstantial faith. The foundation of my faith is a Person. The foundation of my faith is something' that happened in history, not in my lifetime, but many, many years ago. You see, I'm like you. I ... I like all the ... the cool stories of the quick answers to prayer, you know. We ... "My ... you know, my ... my son, you know, he ran away from home and I got the ... the church to pray and we put out an e-mail and everybody in the country was prayin'. The President was prayin', the Congress; everybody was prayin' for my son.

(Laughter) And we just, you know, we stormed the gates of heaven and a few days later, my son came back and he was broken and cryin' and apologized and things are good and it happened in two weeks (Sound of clapping) Hey, I like ... hey, I ... that's the kind of prayers I like. That's what I'd like to happen to me, you know.

Or the doctor had told us there's no hope and we had to have this surgery. And we got there and they did a final X-ray and they couldn't even find the thing and it was gone. That was seven years ago and she's been ... healthy ever since, you know. (Sound of clapping) Yea, God, if that's me, that's how I want You to do it, okay? You know, I (Laughter) ...

I ... I believe all that stuff and I think that's great, but can you see a circumstantial faith? What dwarfs me in my faith and what makes me just have to sit down and take a deep breath and the people that just cause me to just go ... awe in their presence, are not the people that have those stories.

It's the guy who gets totally taken advantage of at work. His ideas are stolen. They don't give him what they promised. And they kick him out of the company and he walks away and decides to just forgive them. And everybody's sayin', "Why don't you sue? Why don't you sue?" And he says, "Well, I just think I'm just gonna trust God with this." Well, how can you trust God with this? Looks at what's not happening, you know. Look what God is not doing. Well, well, my faith in God isn't based on a job situation. No, my faith in God is based on 2,000 years ago, He sent His Son into this world to die for my sin. Why would I doubt God's care for me? He sent His Son to die for my sin." Oh, yeah, well, there's that. Yeah, I ... yeah, right, okay.

But ... but I'm sayin', but what about your job ... you know, that's what I'm sayin'. Or ... or it ... it's not the people whose children and the husbands and wives get healed instantly. For me, it's the people that, you know, I stand with them at their ... their son or daughter or their husband or wife's funeral. And God didn't answer the prayer and they lost their battle with a disease. They never recovered from the accident.

And they stand at those funerals and they say, "You know what? God is still good. I still trust God as my heavenly Father. Why wouldn't I?" Well, all the circumstantial faith people go, "Because look what happened in the vicinity of your current reality."

They go, "Wait a minute. My ... my faith doesn't rest on my ability to interpret circumstance. My faith doesn't rest on my time frame. My faith rests on somethin' that happened 2,000 years ago in history, when God sent His Son into this world to die for my sins and to be raised from the dead. That's where I find my hope. That's why I continue to be faithful. That's why I continue to walk in dependence. And that's why I continue to walk in obedience, even to those strange things in the Scripture that don't seem to be... have any relevance with culture. That is the foundation of my faith.

Now listen. Right now in this moment, your faith is resting against somethin'. You need to know what that is. And here's my warning to you. If it is circumstantial, it will eventually fail you and you will have to adjust your belief system to match current reality. And sometimes current reality isn't all that good. But here's the amazing thing. Here's how much God loves you. God has not asked you to trust Him based on your ability to figure Him out.

God has said, "No, no, I've done something far more significant than that. I'm asking you to trust Me and I'm asking you to trust Me with the details of your life, in your ethics, in your morality, in your relationships, in your family, in your husbands and your wives and your businesses and your money. I'm asking you to trust Me, not because our time frames line up, but because 2,000 years ago, I sent My Son into history to walk as you walk, to face the same trials and temptations that you have faced."

"I love you and I don't want you to think I love you because I answered your prayer. It's way bigger than that. I love you because I sent My Son to die for you. Now I just want you to trust Me and to trust Me and to trust Me and to trust Me. And I want you to lean and prop your faith up against something I did on your behalf in history. Because that's the foundation of faith and that's the foundation of Christianity.

And if you don't, eventually the pleasures of life and the pressures of life are gonna erode whatever you believe right now. The pleasures of life, because whatever you believe right now will eventually become inconvenient to maintain your current faith system. The pressures of life, because eventually somethin's gonna happen that doesn't make sense in the way that you see the world and you'll lose confidence in whatever or whoever it is that you have your faith in.

But the great news is this. For 2,000 years, men and women who have faced all kinds of things, all kinds of tragedy, all kinds of randomness, have come out on the other end saying, "But blessed be the

name of the Lord. I still trust. I still trust. I still believe, because my faith wasn't fragile. My faith wasn't circumstantial. My faith was founded on somethin' that happened in history when God sent His Son into this world to be the Savior of the world."

John: Well today on "Focus on the Family" we're listening to pastor Andy Stanley and you can get a CD of this entire two-day program. It's feature extra content as well, or a DVD, if you'd like to watch Andy's entire series on faith. Order those today when you call 800-A-FAMILY. 800-232-6459. Or you'll find those and our mobile app at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio. Alright, let's go ahead and return now to Andy Stanley on today's "Focus on the Family."

Hebrews 4:14, here we go. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest," high priest is the person that represents us to God. "Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, since that's true, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." There's the foundation of our faith, Jesus. "For," now here's the new information in verse 15, "for we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses."

Now look at that again. "We," talkin' about Jesus, "we don't have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses. There's a difference between sympathize and empathize. You know what that is? Sympathize is, "I have never been in that situation, but gosh, I feel sorry for you." Empathize is, been there, done that. I know exactly how that feels.

Now I don't know how you ... you ... you picture Jesus, but here's what the author of Scripture says.

He says, "Look, you need to understand when you think Jesus, that's not somebody in heaven goin', 'What?' You're talking to your Savior Who says, 'I know. I know. I know. I know not just that it's happening to you; I know what that's like. I know how that feels.'"

Listen ... listen to the rest of this. "But we have One," talking about a mediator, somebody to represent us to God, "but we have One Who has been tempted in," what's that word?

Audience: Every.

Andy: "Every way just as we are. That Jesus," this is what Scripture says, "that Jesus was tempted in every single way as we are." And let me tell you why this is important. When we get to these promises in just a minute and when you think about prayer going forward or if you're about to start praying, you need to understand the ... the door that you're walking through. The Scripture teaches that Jesus has felt what you have felt and has faced what you faced.

Let me ... let me give you a couple of examples. I wrote these in my notes. Jesus spent a night

dreading the events of the following day. Jesus spent a night dreading the events of the following day. Let me just ask you and I'll put my hand up, too. Anybody here ever spent a night dreading the events of the following day (Laughter), other than exams. Okay (Laughter), right? For some of you, it was a court case. For some of you, it was a deposition. For some of you, it was a trip to the hospital. For some of you, it was to see someone you hadn't seen in a long time and you knew that they weren't delivering good news. Probably every one of us in this room has or will spend the night where we can barely sleep or can't sleep at all, because of the events of a coming day.

Your Savior spent the night knowing that the next day, He would be tried, beaten and crucified. And as a young boy growing up in Palestine, He had seen crucifixion. He knew what that was like and He knew the next day, He was going to participate. He knows what it's like to try to go to sleep and dread the events of the coming day.

How about this one? He experienced the rejection and betrayal of his closest friends. Some of you know what that's like. You married her because you were best friends. You married him because you were best friends. And for the first few years, you were best friends. In fact, you thought you were still best friends. And then somebody else sat you down and said, "I ... I don't know how to tell you this, but you need to know what's goin' on."

And you know what it's like to ... for somebody to feel like somebody's taking a hook and grabbed your soul and just ripped your soul out, to where you feel you don't even know what you feel. You feel like you're gonna throw up, just because of news that someone you trusted, somebody you loved, somebody you dedicated a part of your life to and they've betrayed you. And you don't even know how to pray.

Jesus watched as His closest friends ran away in front of Him. And He listened as the guy He poured most of His time into, say to a 14-year-old girl or however old she was, "I don't even know who that is." He felt that at the most critical hour.

How about this one? He's experienced the rejection of a family member. Some of you know what that's like. He saw everything He worked for and lived for crumble around Him. He knows what that feels like. And He experienced crushing, crushing, crushing temptation. See, some of you face temptation that you give in to over and over and over. And you tried and you prayed and you've begged God. You've done everything and you think, "God, you know, are You listening?" And ... and you're heavenly Father says, "I know. I know, because My Son faced the most crushing kind of temptation imaginable. I know. When you come to Me, you don't even have to explain that part, because Your Savior, Your

Mediator, Your High Priest, He knows. He knows. He knows."

Now it's tempting just to stop there and just to sit on that for awhile, because that may radically change the way you approach God, that may radically change the way you pray. And He ... He says, "Look. Before you even begin your prayer, He's been there and done that to the 10th power."

And listen to how that verse ends. "Yet He did not sin." The thing that Jesus has that I don't have and that you don't have, is He has the clarity that comes without sin, because every time you sin and every time you respond incorrectly to the pressures and pleasures of life, every time, you just mist your light and you mist it and mist it and mist it and the mist becomes a fog. And after a while, we can't see straight. And then we do really stupid things and ... and He says, "Yeah, but Jesus faced all that stuff and yet without sin."

So, listen to verse 16. Now this ... this is huge. "Let us then," then means, in light of everything we've just said, "let us then approach God's throne of grace with" what? Confidence. Say it and what is it? It's ...

Audience: Confidence.

Andy: It doesn't say, "formality." It doesn't say, "Let us approach God's throne, remember He's a king, throne of grace with extraordinary formality." In fact, formality is the enemy of in ...intimacy. And formality is the enemy of what He's getting at here.

Because the writers of the New Testament say, when you come to God, you come boldly. You come confidently. You come with extreme emotion. Why? Because He knows what you're carrying. Come boldly to the throne of grace. "Well, let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence."

And then listen to this next phrase, "so that," ready? "So that we may receive" pause. "So that we may receive." Now here ... here ... here it is, ready? "That when you come to God, you're gonna receive something every single time. When you come to God honestly, when you come to God with all the emotion, with all the passion, with all the hope, with all the desire, with all the hurt, with all the story, however you come, if you'll come boldly and if you come without all the formality that the religious systems tend ... tend to hang on a relationship with God, if you'll come boldly, every single time you're gonna receive something from God. You can trust, you can believe, you can know that this is gonna happen every single time.

John: And you're listening to pastor Andy Stanley on "Focus on the Family" and we have a CD of this presentation with extra content and also a DVD of Andy's full message on faith. A five-part series, I

believe, and you can find details about it at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio or call 800-232-6459. 800, the letter A and the word FAMILY. Alright, let's go ahead and return no to more from Andy Stanley on "Focus on the Family."

Andy: Here's the first thing you'll receive, "mercy," mercy, mercy. Mercy is the fact that God's gonna take your issue seriously, not because it's a serious issue, but because it's your issue. Mercy is, that I take my children's request and complaint seriously, not because they're serious complaints, but because they're my children's complaints.

Mercy is that God is going to lean in your direction and say (whispering), "I know. I know. I know." And now "I know it happened," "I know because I know how that feels," mercy. And I'm telling' you, the older you get and the more mature you've become as a Christian, the fact that God knows, more and more and more becomes enough and it will become enough for you.

Sometimes mercy is tangible. Sometimes it's, "God, I just don't think I can take it any more" and the phone rings and somebody says, "Let's go to lunch. "And you go, "Oh, wow!" Tangible mercy. Sometimes it's that mercy that just ...it's just the peace of God. Nothing changes and your pour out your heart and you come bold and you say, "God, I'm so lonely." And "God, I can't get ahead." Or "God, it seems everybody gets a break but me." Or "God, whatever it is. And you just pour out your heart to God and at the end, nothing's changed, but you kind of sense that maybe you've changed, mercy.

But every time you come to God boldly, He says, "Let me tell what you can count on. You can hold my feet to the fire. You can trust me. This is a faith thing. I'm promising. I promise; I promise; I promise," ...mercy. Mercy is Jesus standing' outside the tomb of Lazarus and He already knows what He's gonna do and He already knows He's gonna raise Lazarus from the dead and He knows he's gonna be the star of the show and everything's gonna work out. And Jesus walks up to the tomb of Lazarus and before He does His big deal, His big miracle, before He intervenes the way they want Him to intervene, this is so huge. Jesus pauses outside of the tomb of Lazarus and the Bible says in John 11, that He wept. And everybody watching Him says, "Look how much He loved Lazarus."

Why did He pause and weep? I think it's in a microcosm, a message that reflects and it sort of echoes through the ages that your Savior understands and He's not too big and busy to feel what you feel. Mercy is (whispering), "I know. And I'm not angry with you for feelin' it. And I'm not put off with you for feeling it. And you just keep bringin' it, every single time to Me and My frontline response to you, every time I promise is gonna be mercy." And sometimes it's gonna be tangible mercy. Sometimes it's gonna be mercy that takes the pressure off. And sometimes it's gonna just be that intangible thing that comes with knowing (Sigh), that my heavenly Father knows.

And there's a second thing you get every single time. "And find grace to help us in our time of need." Grace to help us in our time of need, grace in this context is the strength and the energy to endure. That's what it means. It's the strength or the ability or the energy to endure. God says, "You know what?" And this ... you know, quoting a guy that ... that died a long time ago. He had this great quote. He says, "God hasn't promised to deliver us from our circumstances, but God has promised to deliver *through* them."

And many of you today listenin' to this message, could stand up and tell your story of how you begged God and you leaned hard on God and nothing changed. But looking back, God just gave you the energy, gave you the strength and gave you the endurance to just ... to press through. And some of you would say, "As bad as I hated those circumstances, if I had to do it all over again, I'm not sure I would opt for easier circumstances, because what I experienced and what I learned about that" and here's the words you would use, "the grace of God." The enduring power of God, the strength of God is a lesson you'll never ever forget.

And God says, "Let me tell you what. Sometimes I'm gonna take the pressure off and sometimes I'm gonna intervene in your circumstances. But I promise every single time to give you the grace, the strength, the power to endure."

And your husband may not come back, but I'm gonna give you the grace to endure that. And your Prodigal daughter may not call for a year, but I'm gonna give you the grace to endure that. And you may not get the job, the deal that you wanted, but I'm gonna give you the grace to endure that. And she may never give you the time of day, I'm gonna give you the grace to endure that. And you may ... may never be where you want to be financially or with your company, but you know what? If instead of gettin' frustrated and abandoning Me because I didn't show up in your circumstance, if instead you will learn to lean hard on Me, I promise every single time, grace and mercy in your time of need, mercy and grace that helps in your time of need. And sometimes I'll deliver you from. But every time I promise to deliver you through, if you'll come to Me and not give up on Me, because you couldn't find Me in the circumstances of life."

Now I'll be honest, that is not a very emotionally satisfying answer. This is what we honestly want ... this is what we want and I'm with you, okay? This is what we want. We want God to give us a can of intervention, okay? "Heavenly Father, I pray that he would break up with her, so that she would pay attention to me." This right there (Laughter), I want you to get (Laughter) ... I want you to work right there, okay? And God, at work you know, my boss, you know. They're thinkin' of movin' him to Detroit anyway. I just want You (squirt, squirt) to move him to Detroit. I just want a little bit of intervention

(Laughter) there. And then the third floor, the whole third floor, just takes out the whole third floor (Laughter) over there, right?" (Laughter) ... that's what we really want. We want God ... we ... we just want to be able to ... and He's just gonna let us intervene.

You know what we don't want? You know what you've never prayed? God, I am such a problem. (Laughter) God, the problem's me. God, please, please deliver my wife from me (Laughter), right? See, I don't really want justice comin' my way. I want justice goin' your way. I want grace and mercy comin' my way, right? We just want ... we just want little spot intervention.

But here's what the Scripture teaches, listen. We live in the age of mercy and grace. This is the age where God doesn't bring about justice. This is the age where God extends grace and mercy to you, who trust and lean on Him and to those of you who don't. In fact, some of you've been a Christian for about a year and you look at the circumstances that led you to the place of brokenness and led you to the place of faith and you would look back and say, "You know what? God extended grace and mercy to me, even when I was running from Him. Why? Because this is the age of grace and mercy. And if you come to Him as a believer, you get grace and mercy. And if you come to Him as an unbeliever, you get grace and mercy. This is the age in which God says, "I know. I know about the consequences of sin. I understand your sorrow and I mourn when there's death, but I'm not removing any of those three. But in this age of sin, sorrow and death, I will extend grace and mercy every single time you come to Me.

And when it's the age of intervention, it's not gonna be little, itty-bitty intervention. It's gonna be big intervention. It'll be The End of the World as you know it. And the Bible teaches that there is gonna be a day and age when you get what you want, but it's bigger than your little life and your little job and who's sittin' on the end of the front row and who drives the cool car. It's gonna be way bigger than that. It's gonna be a day and age when Jesus says, "It's gonna be the end of sin, the end of sorrow and the end of death." It's gonna be huge intervention.

But in that day and age is the end of God's extension of grace and mercy. It happens all at one time. And for those of us who became Christians later in life, we're so grateful that the end didn't come before we had an opportunity to respond to the grace and the mercy of our heavenly Father. This is the age of grace and mercy.

And every once in a while, God intervenes. And every once in a while, it's like He breaks His own rules and He allows us to miss and dodge the consequences of our own sin. And every once in a while, there's a miraculous healing. And every once in a while, God just does the unusual thing and we just

say, "Thank You; thank You; thank You, because You didn't have to do that. You didn't do that because I had great faith. You did that because You're a merciful heavenly Father."

But you know what? I know that, I can't expect that every time. I'll just celebrate when it happens. And when I don't get my way, I still trust You, because the foundation of my faith isn't this. The foundation of my faith is Jesus, history, what You did 2,000 years ago that echoes and has been echoing ever since.

Closing Wrap:

John: Well that's quite a statement of faith that is firm and unmoving that not subject to circumstances. And we've heard from pastor Andy Stanley of Northpoint Ministries on today's "Focus on the Family."

Jim: Boy if all of us could grab a hold of these truths and live them out to have that kind of strong faith in spite of our circumstances. That's the kind of faith I want my boys to grow up with and I think we both want that for ourselves, our spouse and our kids. We just don't know how to help them make all of those connections that Andy Stanley has walked us through over these past two programs. And like we've said, John, this is from a five-part DVD series and when you give to the work of Focus on the Family, we'd be happy to send you the series. It's called, "Faith, Hope and Luck." For a donation we'll send that to you. Watch it with your teens or your neighbors; people who are questioning whether faith is real. Anyone who needs that firm foundation of faith.

Closing Voice Track:

John: Our number here is 800-232-6459. Or you'll find the series on line at www.FocusontheFamily.com/radio.

Our program was provided by Focus on the Family and on behalf of Jim Daly, I'm John Fuller thanking you for listening and hoping you have a great weekend. Do plan to be with us on Monday as we have Dr. Gary Chapman here. He'll explain how God can help you improve your marriage and your parenting journey.

Gary Chapman: When I finally said to God I don't know what else to do, as soon as I said that, there came to my mind of Jesus on his knees washing the feet of his followers. An I really heard God say, not audibly, but I heard God say in my heart, "That's the problem in your marriage. You do not have the attitude of Christ towards your wife."

John: That's Gary Chapman on Monday as we once again help you and your family thrive.