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Thinking Biblically

Guests: Peter and Kelli Worrall
From the series: 20 Things We'd Tell Our Twenty-Something Selves (Day 3 of 3)
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Bob: One of the lessons Peter Worrall has learned, as he has matured as a Christian, is that his life is to be fundamentally God-centered.

Peter: If you're living for *you* and God is a player in *your* story, it's not going to go like it should. If you're living for *God*, and you are a player in *God's* story, then it will go like it's meant to; because it's all about God. This is His creation / this is His world. You are His child—part of His plan—"Make God's glory your goal," is where I would launch.

Bob: This is *FamilyLife Today* for Friday, October 7th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. When God is at the center of your life / instead of being a character in your story—that changes pretty much everything. We'll talk more about that today. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us. I've been sitting here, thinking about what—what advice you'd give, not to your 20-something self—I've been thinking about the advice you'd give to 20-something young men. You had a chance to do that, not long ago, when you spoke to students / young men at Liberty University. You told them to step up, and grow up, and get up. There was a lot of "up" you told them.
[Laughter]

Dennis: To put up their video games and kneel down and love a young lady.

Bob: Yes. There is—among a lot of young men in their 20s—there's a—there's a failure to engage.

Dennis: Well, it's *safe* not to engage.

Peter: Yes. Actually, with the video games—I think in video games; because I'm a video game fan, actually—a little bit.

Bob: Yes?

Peter: But what happens is—you start to live out in the video games the reality that's much easier to control—that you can't construct in real life.

Dennis: Huh!

Bob: We should introduce our video game fan who is joining us here today.

Dennis: Peter and Kelli Worrall join us on *FamilyLife Today*. Welcome back to the broadcast.

Peter: It's good to be back.

Kelly: Thank you. Good to be back

Dennis: Glad you guys are back. They have written a book called, *20 Things We'd Tell Our Twenty-Something Selves*. That explains what Bob was talking about a bit earlier. Both Kelli and Peter are professors at Moody Bible Institute. They've been married all the way back to 1999. We've been talking about their relationship and reflecting back.

Bob: And you [Peter] jumped right into this video game issue, because I hear you saying it's not that video games are bad—it's when they replace real relationships?

Peter: Yes. Actually, video games deal with a lot of problem solving. What happens is—when you find that you can't solve those problems in real life, you go to an alternative life, which is the life you create online. Then you find that you *are* the champion; you *are* the victor; you *are* the real man in a computer game—but you're not that same real man in real life.

We have to encourage people to not level-up their character in a computer game but to level-up their real self. When I realized that, I put down my computer games—and I switched over and thought, “Okay; how can I increase myself as a teacher? How can I increase myself as an athlete? How can I increase myself in these ways?” As you said—to challenge somebody to be a sincere lover of a woman, *that* requires all kinds of sacrifice.

Dennis: And it's *really* dangerous!

Peter: Yes; it's one thing to rescue a princess in a video game. It's another thing to go find a princess in real life.

Bob: Peter, why is it that young men in their late 20s—you were one of them at one point—just can't get off the dime, and start a real relationship with a woman, and ask her to marry him, and get on with it? Why are they waiting so long? What's the fear?

Peter: Well, there is fear that this might not be “the one” and there's fear that “I'm not the one...yet.” There are all kinds of fears about the girl—that: “Well, actually, she might not be this great in five year's time”—because of my consumer-selfish mindset.

Dennis: And you also said earlier, the fear of a relationship might fail—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —or “Our marriage might end in—in divorce,” or “It might not work out.”

Peter: Yes.

Bob: So if you’re sitting down with a young man, who is 25 years old, are you telling him, “Let’s get going!” or are you telling him, ‘Take your time; you’ll know when it’s right’? How are you counseling him?

Peter: I’m talking to him usually about God and himself—those are the first two things—and then about the woman. I’m not usually talking to him about the woman first, and then himself, and then God; because that would all be backwards.

You often find the biggest question from me is: “Can you love someone unconditionally?” The answer I’m looking for is, “No.” Then I know that they’re ready to surrender to the God, who can equip them. [Laughter] But you see—when they’re like, “Aw! Yeah! No; I mean, she’s—she’s the best! I can’t imagine anybody like *her—ever!*” [Laughter] I think they’re kind of in un-reality, where they’re not going to die to themselves.

Bob: You guys talk—one of the pieces of advice you would give to your 20-something selves—is about understanding and managing your emotions. That’s what—for so many 20-somethings—that is—love is just purely in that plane / it’s the emotional plane. They have to understand love goes far beyond that point; right?

Kelli: Yes; yes. It’s a commitment, it’s a sacrifice, it’s an action, it’s a verb—we *do* it—we don’t *feel* it. I mean, there’s the emotional component to it; but primarily, it’s an action and a commitment.

Peter: Yes. The idea of: “Well, you have to be authentic about your feelings. You let your *feelings* be expressed, and then you follow your feelings. They will lead you to the truth.” This is in a lot of movies, where the person is repressed, emotionally. They start to express their emotions and that somehow leads them to truth. In many cases, in real life, it leads to addiction. In many cases, in real life, it leads to very serious negative consequences. So we advise people to evaluate their emotions.

Now, the first step in evaluating your emotions is—you have to let yourself feel them and know what they are—so suppressing your emotions and denying your emotions is not really an option. You say, “What am I feeling right now?”

Dennis: Name it.

Peter: Name it.

Kelli: Yes.

Peter: Name it: “I am feeling angry,” or “I am feeling happy,” or “I am feeling excited.” For men, in particular, there is a whole bunch of vocabulary that we have to develop. We sometimes think, “I have a backache.” Maybe you could call that “stressed.” Use an emotional word for it rather than a physical word. Then evaluate, “Is this appropriate for this situation right now?” Now, if it’s appropriate, then celebrate it! Run with it! Express it!

But if it’s not appropriate, then bring it to God. Let’s take an emotion—like anxiety: “What does God say?” He says, “Cast all your anxieties on Me, because I care for you.” “What does He say?”—“Be anxious for nothing.” Because God says these things to us in Scripture, we’re to follow it through. We *feel* the anxiety—you can’t give to God what you won’t let yourself feel—and then you express it and give it to God. You do it again, and again, and again. Favorite passage from Scripture on this is actually Jonah, Chapter 4, where Jonah is *furious* because the Ninevites are going to be able to survive.

Bob: They repented.

Peter: They repented. “Oh! [Laughter] That merciful God! That’s terrible!” Jonah knew exactly what He would do—so he’s angry / he’s furious. And what does God say? Does God say: “I want to affirm your anger / I just want you to *feel* it”? “Now, maybe I’ll just hand over control to you so you can annihilate these people like you really want to.” [Laughter]

He asks him a question—He says, “Is it *right* for you to feel angry?” and He just leaves it at that. Now, the inference is: “It’s not right.” Then later, in the same chapter, He asks again, “Is it *right* for you to feel angry?” He’s trying to show Jonah that he’s in a place, which is not appropriate for him; and he needs to change his condition, which his emotions are indicating. His emotions come second to his will.

Dennis: Several weeks ago, I was getting ready to go to bed. There was something that just had me ticked off. [Laughter]

Peter: Can we ask what it is?

Dennis: No! [Laughter]

Peter: [Laughing] We will leave that; okay.

Dennis: No; you can’t! You can’t—you can *ask* but [Laughter] I’m not answering! [Laughter]

Peter: Okay.

Dennis: But the point is—I did a little bit of what you’re saying there—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —I said, “So, what is it I’m feeling here?” I decided to sleep on it. And the next day, I woke up; and I thought, “You know, it was a good thing I didn’t express what I was feeling—

Peter: Right.

Kelli: Yes.

Dennis: —“to the person that I would have expressed it to.”

Peter: Right.

Kelli: Yes.

Dennis: Okay?

Peter: Yes.

Kelli: Yes.

Dennis: Especially if it was my wife! [Laughter]

Peter: Yes.

Bob: I had a suspicion that might be what was going on.

Dennis: Also, I think you said something about it—name your emotion; and then, if you can, celebrate the emotion / express it! But express it in a way that doesn’t damage the other person.

Peter: Yes; yes.

Bob: I think it’s really good—ask the question. This is what you said: “Ask the question, ‘Is what I’m feeling appropriate in this situation?’”

Kelli: Right.

Peter: —“for this situation?”

Bob: That's a powerful question to ask; because, oftentimes, we go, "This is just pure selfishness oozing out of me—the—"

Peter: Right.

Bob: —"the feeling I'm having right here."

Dennis: What hit me was—it's taken me 40 / almost 44 years of marriage!

Kelli: Yes.

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: Speaking of love being a long-term commitment and learning how to love. It's taken me *that long* to finally get it!

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: I feel like such a first grader!

Peter: Yes; yes! [Laughter]

Dennis: You with me?

Peter: Yes. Aw; yes! That's how we felt writing this book! We wanted to get back and we wanted to address those issues so that somebody didn't have to have such a *long* time learning some of these things as we did—hopefully.

Bob: One of the things—and by the way—we're talking to Peter and Kelli Worrall, who have written a book called *20 Things We'd Tell Our Twenty-Something Selves*. It's a book that's in our *FamilyLife Today* Resource Center. You can go online at FamilyLifeToday.com, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY if you want to get a copy and pass it on to a 20-something you know.

One of the things, Kelli, that you address in this book is—you would tell your 20-something self something about patience.

Kelli: Yes.

Bob: This is a lesson that, over two decades, has been a difficult one for you to learn.

Kelli: It's been a *very* difficult one. I think I'm learning it again right *now*, oddly enough. Yes; in one way, I waited all of my 20s to be married—I know some people wait much longer than that and are still waiting—but it was a hard wait. Once we got married, we

tried to have children and that didn't happen. For several years, we went through that process—and went the infertility / experienced the infertility pain—and I was waiting to be a mom. Then we started the adoption process. Our first adoption paperwork went over to China. We were told in 2006—when that paperwork went to China—that it would be 18 months and then we would be able to go pick up our daughter. Those 18 months turned into six years—that was a very painful wait.

Bob: So, knowing what you know now—if you could go back to your 20-something self and say: “Here’s what you need to learn about patience. Here’s what you do when you get to those hard moments of infertility / those hard moments, when every month, there’s a reminder you’re not pregnant again this month—

Kelli: Right; right.

Bob: —what would you say?

Kelli: You know, it probably sounds cliché, but going back to the sovereignty of God. I think we can't see that so often when we're in the midst of the trial / in the midst of the wait, but you do see it in hindsight. I see it all over my story, and I'll see it all over Scripture—how God's timing is, so often, not our timing. We have two precious children now through adoption. Had things happened in my timing, it wouldn't have been that way—we wouldn't have had these kiddos—and these are *my* kids. I know that. They're the kids that God hand-picked for us.

Kind of a cool part of our story is that we sent our paperwork to China in 2006, like I said, and thought it would be 18 months. It turned into six years. In the midst of that six-year wait, we decided to pursue a second adoption domestically. Our son, Daryl, came to us when he was seven months old. He was in the foster system—went into the foster system / so we were fostering him for three years, working through that journey. That's a *hard*, long journey and another exercise in patience and trust.

The cool part—like the big GOD! on the end of our adoption journey was that, in January of 2012, we finally got Amelia's picture after six years of waiting—we get our referral for her adoption. Then, in February, we get a letter from the Chinese embassy saying, “Your finalization date is March 26, 2012.” That was the date when that six-year adoption journey was going to finish.

Then just a week or so later, we went to a court in Chicago, with Daryl, to petition for his adoption. We stood in front of the judge, in Chicago, with him. The judge says, “Everything looks good, and I will finalize this paperwork for you on March 26, 2012.” On the same exact day—one adoption journey took over three years / one over six years—but on the same exact day, those two little kiddos became Worralls. It was just a precious detail that God gave me. To me, it was a message of: “I was there all along. I had this. I had this.”

Peter: Yes. I think of the example of Joseph in Scripture. This is a very powerful example to me—in that he was in prison / he hadn't done *anything* wrong. He's got to wait there, in the jail. Then, at the beginning of Chapter 41 in Genesis, it says, "Oh; and 'two years later...'" So at the end of Chapter 40, it says, "The cupbearer forgot him," and then two years later, he remembers him; and he's in jail! This is part of God's will / God's plan—because a theme in Scripture, again and again, is the fullness of time—that we don't know what God is doing. We don't know why God has brought that; and we can't think, "Oh; when that happens in the future..." because Joseph was faithful to God in the prison sentence / he was faithful to God in that moment.

When we were in infertility, we couldn't think: "Oh when we have a child..." "When we have a child..." "When we have a child..." We had to think, "How do we live God-focused / God-honoring lives without a child right now? How is our life meaningful in the present?" not "When do we start in the future?"

Dennis: You're talking about the basis or the foundation of your faith.

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: And before we came in the studio, we were spending a little time together. You took us into your classroom—

Peter: Yes; I did.

Dennis: —at Moody Bible Institute—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —with how many students would be in this classroom?

Peter: Thirty-five in two sections—I teach 70 but in two sections of 35.

Dennis: And what would their ages be?

Peter: They'd be in their late teens/early 20s.

Dennis: Okay; and you run them through an exercise to teach them something incredibly profound.

Peter: Yes. Well, what I do is—I put a series of political issues on the board. I put same-sex marriage, abortion, the environment, social justice—and I'll put these things on the board—and I'll say to them, "List these in order of importance." Now, I'll say immediately, "I don't have a particular agenda with this,"—they just have to list them. They're talking about them for about 10/15 minutes; and then I'll say, "Freeze." And

then, I'll say, "Okay; how many of you mentioned God at all?" This is at Moody Bible Institute. Then I'll say, "How many of you referenced Scripture to justify a position?"

Now, what I point out is that they say that they love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength; but they've been so thoroughly secularized that, even though they have a heart for God, it doesn't come through when they're evaluating these questions / these ideas. In examining our foundation, we have to have some way of seeing that: "Is what we say—that comes out of our mouth—the reality of the way we live?"

Dennis: "Is the foundation of our faith—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —"the Bible?"

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: "Are we thinking from the Bible to real life?" or "Are we thinking from real life back to the Bible?"

Peter: Yes. I actually—I think that's a two-way street, but the most *important* one is thinking biblically—is getting immersed in a daily devotional / surrender to God's Word so that it changes our life and informs every issue of life. But then, when I'm going through life, I need to—by my 20s—just have some form of being able to see what's going on and say, "What does the Bible have to say to this?" It kind of goes from life to the Bible and from the Bible to life, but that's only going to happen if you *really* get into the Word of God.

Dennis: When you shared that with us, I immediately thought of the passage in John, Chapter 15, where Jesus said, "Abide in Me and I in you."

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: He goes on to say, "If My words abide in you..."

Peter: Yes; yes. It's powerful.

Dennis: He talks about living life at that point—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —and fellowshiping with Him. That's how we're going to draw life—

Peter: Yes.

Dennis: —from the Bible and from Jesus Christ—

Peter: Oh; yes.

Dennis: —because both are alive!

Peter: Amen!

Bob: I want to ask you—because I noticed, in going through your book—you’ve got the Bible study for this book online rather than integrated into the book. Was that a strategic choice you made?

Peter: It was; it was.

Kelli: Yes.

Bob: I thought part of the shrewdness of what you did was—you’ve got a book here that I can give to somebody—

Kelli: Yes.

Bob: —who may be marginally—

Kelli: Absolutely.

Bob: —spiritual.

Peter: Yes.

Kelli: Yes.

Peter: What Christian Smith calls the Post-Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deist—the person, who’s in church, but is wandering away from the basic tenets—this book is for them too. It doesn’t use a lot of the “Christian-ese” because, quite frankly, we’ve lost some of the 20-somethings in using some language that we haven’t fully explained. We’ve quoted verses at them to the point where they don’t really understand what we’re talking about.

This is a Christ-centered conversation that has Kelli and me going back and forth about these issues that we raise. It’s inviting a third person into the conversation, to say, “Well, this is our experience—how about you?”

Bob: In the Bible study that you’ve got online/on your website, now, you *can* get a little deeper—

Peter: Oh; yes.

Kelli: Right.

Bob: —into what the Scriptures teach / into the specifics of the Bible—

Kelli: Yes.

Bob: —so that people see that this is not just a good idea that you had—

Kelli: Exactly.

Peter: Yes.

Bob: —this is really God's wisdom here.

Dennis: And Bob, I want you to tell our listeners how to get a copy of the book. I want to come back in a minute—we've left out the number one piece of advice you would tell your 20-something self. We're going to talk about that before we're done, here on *FamilyLife Today*.

Bob: The book is called *20 Things We'd Tell Our Twenty-Something Selves*. It's written by our guests today, Peter and Kelli Worrall. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com to order a copy of the book from us online. Again, the website is FamilyLifeToday.com; or call, toll-free, 1-800-"F" as in family, "L" as in life, and then the word, "TODAY." That's 1-800-358-6329. Don't forget the Bible study guide that goes along with the book. You'll find that on Peter and Kelli's website. There's a link to their website when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com.

Dennis—

Dennis: Well, we've been talking to the authors of *20 Things We'd Tell Our Twenty-Something Selves*, Peter and Kelli Worrall. We've left out number one—it's what it's all about.

Peter: "Make God's glory your goal." You see, when Jesus was asked what His greatest piece of advice would be, He says: "Well, it's all summed up in 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And then love your neighbor as yourself.'" So the greatest commandment is our heart-commitment—is our focus and our orientation on God.

And that is the—the one thing, in your 20s, from which everything else flows. If you're living for *you* and God is a player in *your* story, it's not going to go like it should. If you're living for *God*, and you are a player in *God's* story, then it will go like it's meant to;

because it's all about God. This is His creation / this is His world. You are His child—part of His plan—"Make God's glory your goal," is where I would launch.

Dennis: Kelli, you make a comment in this chapter of your book, that you used to recite a mantra that really revealed where your heart was.

Kelli: Yes; yes. It was actually when I direct plays at Moody, because it was such a public thing—it was an expression of art. But those expressions of art, especially, can become all about us and: "What are people going to think about me?" and "Am I going to succeed?" "Am I going to fail?" That sort of thought pattern can be very destructive, and damaging, and create a lot of anxiety.

So yes; I would recite: "It's not about me; it's all about Him." "It's not about me; it's all about Him." It came to—"Even if this play is a flop, if He gets the glory somehow in that, so be it; because it's not about me; it's all about Him."

Dennis: The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:5, "For what we proclaim is not ourselves but Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Peter: Amen.

Bob: Kelli, Peter, thank you guys again for being with us today.

We want to take just a minute here and say, "Happy anniversary!" to a couple of folks. First of all, Neal and Cindi Schalow, who live in Rothchild, Wisconsin—today is their 44th anniversary—"Happy anniversary!" to the Schalows. And tomorrow, Bill and Lucia Seranko, who live in Arlington Heights, Illinois, are celebrating their 50th anniversary as husband and wife. So "Congratulations!" to Neal and Cindi and Bill and Lucia—and to all of you who are celebrating anniversaries today or this weekend. Anniversaries matter. They're a big deal.

One of the reasons FamilyLife exists is so that more couples will celebrate more anniversaries and will thrive together in marriage. Our goal is to effectively develop godly marriages and families, the kind of marriages and families that change the world one home at a time.

We appreciate those of you who partner with us as we seek to provide practical biblical help and hope for marriages and families, every day, on *FamilyLife Today*, on our website, through our mobile app, through all of the resources we have available, here at FamilyLife, our events—everything we do has that goal in mind.

If you're able to help with financial support for our ministry today, we'd love to say, "Thank you for your partnership with us," by sending you a banner that Barbara Rainey has created that declares that your home is an embassy of the kingdom of heaven. You can request the banner when you make a donation online at FamilyLifeToday.com, or

when you call 1-800-FL-TODAY to make a donation; or you can request the banner when you mail your donation to *FamilyLife Today*, PO Box 7111, Little Rock, AR; and our zip code is 72223.

We also want to say, “Hi!” to hundreds of couples who live in central Florida. Tonight, at 7:00, we kick off our *Weekend to Remember*® getaway in Fort Myers. Last weekend, we were in Tampa. Two weeks from now, we’ve got *Weekend to Remember* getaways happening in Jacksonville, Florida, and Parsippany, New Jersey. If you’ve not yet made plans to join us for one of these upcoming getaways, we’ve got a bunch of them happening this fall—love to have you be a part of a *Weekend to Remember*. You can find out more when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com.

We hope you have a great weekend this weekend. Hope you and your family are able to worship together in your local church this weekend. And I hope you can join us back on Monday when we’re going to talk about the enemy of faith—it’s fear. Trillia Newbell is going to be here to help us understand how we deal with fear and how we grow in faith. Hope you can tune in for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I’m Bob Lepine. We will see you back Monday for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

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