

# FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

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## Her Romantic Needs

Guests: Shaunti Feldhahn, Barbara Rainey, and Tommy Nelson  
From the series: 25 Years of Radio (Day 2 of 3)  
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**Bob:** For romance and intimacy to work the way it's supposed to in a marriage, a wife has to know her husband loves her. According to Shaunti Feldhahn, she needs to hear it over and over and over again.

**Shaunti:** A woman doesn't sort of feel *permanently* loved the day you sign the marriage papers—and that she needs to not only *hear* it, but she needs to actually have it demonstrated, *especially* given the fact that, deep underneath, that confident woman there has that latent insecurity. When it's triggered, she *really* needs to be reassured that: “Yes; I still love you. We are okay.”

**Bob:** This is *FamilyLife Today* for Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey. I'm Bob Lepine. For a wife to be responsive to her husband's romantic advances, the husband needs to be aware of a variety of emotional needs his wife has. We'll talk more about that today. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us on the Thursday edition. I want you to imagine for a minute that you and Barbara had had, over the course of your marriage—five times a week you'd had a significant 30-minute conversation—five different times every week, every year of your marriage. Then imagine that all those conversations were available on audiotape, and you could go dig them out and re-listen to them. That would be quite a treasure trove; wouldn't it?

**Dennis:** I'm just trying to process the picture you just created of me listening to Barbara for 30 minutes a day.

**Bob:** Oh, I said having a conversation, not you listening to Barbara—oh, maybe it's the same thing. [Laughter]

**Dennis:** Well, I do think there's a good bit of listening that takes place, because—it's interesting—I married an introvert; but in our marriage, I would say she talks maybe four times as much as I do.

**Bob:** She feels safe!

**Dennis:** I think she does; and she knows I love her, and she knows I like to listen to her.

**Bob:** Yes. The reason I bring it up is because—we're not married—but you and I, over the last 25 years, have had, every day, a significant 30-minute conversation, often with a guest, talking about issues related to marriage and family. We do have a vault, where we can go and we can pull out those old recordings. We can listen back to some of the wisdom that was shared over that 25-year period.

Later this year, we're going to be celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> birthday as a broadcast. During the year, we thought it would be fun for us and for our listeners to hear some of the wisdom that has been shared with us, now over a quarter of a century.

**Dennis:** Take them into the vault and unpack some of the choice treasures that are there.

**Bob:** And with Valentine's Day coming, we thought, "Let's talk about romance, and intimacy, and sex this week, and hear what guests have shared with us over the years." So we're going to focus here on how men and women view this important subject very differently.

**Dennis:** And I'm going to share today what I believe are the top five romantic needs of a woman. Tomorrow, I'll share the top five romantic needs of a man. Just to get started—and I'll hit each of these five before we finish the broadcast today—number one, we've just been talking about it—your wife needs an intimate relationship with you. She needs an emotional connection with her husband. Usually, that takes time / that takes conversation.

**Bob:** Well, author and speaker, Shaunti Feldhahn, and her husband Jeff were with us, talking about this subject. We were talking about the differences between how men and women view romance and intimacy. Your wife Barbara joined us that day. Shaunti talked about the same thing—how important a relationship is to a woman for her to be able to engage with her husband sexually.

[Previous Interview]

**Shaunti:** A woman really needs to feel totally close to her husband, outside the bedroom; whereas, for a man, that's one of the ways they *build* that sense of closeness. You have a huge dichotomy there. And the thing is—this is, in most cases, purely a physiological difference between you and her. On the physiological gap, you can bridge that so easily by just doing things in the way *she* needs them to be done, not necessarily the way *you* automatically think.

Now, for example, we had one woman who wrote an absolutely terrific quote, where she said: “You know, I’m like a cruise ship headed into port. At night, port is that place where the house is quiet, and all the chores are done, and the kids are in bed, and I’m focused—man!”

**Bob:** The pillow is soft; yes.

**Shaunti:** Yes; exactly. She said: “My husband—he’s like a speedboat. He can be ready to go the minute he thinks of it, but I can’t turn on a dime like he does. So when”— and I love this—“when he rolls over and says, ‘Hey, what are you doing over there?’ then she’s thinking, ‘Oh, it’s going to take me some time for this cruise ship, that’s already in sight of port to turn,’”—and instead, to realize: “You know what, guys? You can get an entirely different result if you just start flirting with her a little bit earlier in the evening.” As one guy said: “I sent my wife an email saying, ‘I saw you getting dressed this morning—can’t wait until tonight!’”

One of the things that a woman said—that put it perfectly was—“Any woman who feels sexy to her husband outside the bedroom will never have an excuse when it comes to that time.” So she can still be a cruise ship, but she’s heading towards *you*; okay?—that’s what *she*’s anticipating.

[Studio]

**Bob:** Again, that’s author, Shaunti Feldhahn. Her books on this subject—*For Men Only* [and] *For Women Only*—very helpful books in this area of helping us understand one another when it comes to our relationship and, particularly, to sex and intimacy in our relationship.

**Dennis:** And if you’ll excuse me, Bob, hang on—I want to finish this text to Barbara, but I’m not going to do it exactly like—

**Bob:** —you’re flirting with her?

**Dennis:** Well, there is some flirting taking place; but the second of the top five romantic needs is that of affection.

**Bob:** Okay.

**Dennis:** What our wives need is—they need us to show physical affection for them without it being attached to sex or demanding sex. I just know, for Barbara, one of the things that I did last night that she really liked is—I took her face in my hands, gently, and just said: “I just really like you. I really enjoy being with you.” Now, *that* meets a need in her life, as my wife, some / almost four-and-a-half decades into our marriage relationship.

It's the wise man who knows what kind of physical affection to show his wife to communicate to her that he loves her, cares about her, and really does like her—

**Bob:** —with no strings attached.

**Dennis:** —with no strings attached.

**Bob:** Barbara talked about that. We had her with us on *FamilyLife Today* many times, talking about this subject. She shared very candidly, and I thought very wisely, about what matters most to her, as a woman, in the area of romance and intimacy.

[Previous Interview]

**Barbara:** I think women need security, and I think they need acceptance—I think they need love spoken to them in those ways. They need to know that, no matter how I look—because pregnancies, and babies, and all those kinds of things change the way a woman looks. I think she's looking for her husband to still love her, and to still accept her, and to still be captivated by her, no matter how she looks / no matter what the years may do to her. And from that, then, comes a sense of security, and stability, and wellbeing that comes from being accepted completely by another person.

**Bob:** Barbara, when Dennis says things to you like, “You know, there is no one I would rather spend time with than you,” do you believe that?

**Barbara:** I think, when we first got married, I didn't believe that; because I think I—you know, it's interesting—we get married because we *feel* that acceptance and we feel that love from another person. But then, after we're married, we kind of go, “But did he really mean it?” We start pulling back and questioning it. I think, initially, I knew he did want to spend time with me, and he really was committed; but with time, things change. When you get to know each other more, then the question arises: “Now, does he still really love me? Does he still really accept me now that he knows what he knows and now that he's seen my old sin nature?” and “Now that we've been through these difficulties, is he still going to love me?”

I think I went through a time when I doubted that for awhile. I wasn't so sure it was real. But I believe it now—I've come to a place of real understanding that I know it's true.

[Studio]

**Bob:** There is something powerful and profound about the issue of safety and security for our wives for them to be free to give themselves to their husbands; right?

**Dennis:** There really is, Bob. Again, I'm talking about the five greatest romantic needs a woman has in a marriage relationship. And she's really talked about number three. I have it written down here: "A wife needs to feel protected, cared for, and safe." In other words, she needs the security of your love—that you're going the distance with her in your marriage. She's going to be a whole lot more apt to respond and be the kind of wife she needs to be if she's in a relationship where she feels safe, and secure, and protected by her husband.

I wish an older man had put his arm around me—as a young man starting out his marriage, I grossly underestimated this romantic need right here—that your wife needs to feel protected—physically, spiritually, emotionally, and sexually.

**Bob:** Well, and even if that's happening in marriage—even if a wife does feel safe—we still have to recognize that, when it comes to intimacy, we are different, as men and women. I mean, it goes beyond just romantic needs. We are very different. Barbara talked about that one time when Shaunti Feldhahn was back with us, and we were having a conversation about the differences between men and women in this area.

[Previous Interview]

**Barbara:** I think we're wired differently—I think our emotional makeup is so different. For a man, it's so tied up with who he is as a man / his masculinity and his identity, as a male. It's not as closely tied to our identity, as a female. We have other ways for expressing our femaleness; and for a man, that's so central to who he is as a male.

**Bob:** So you're saying it does meet an emotional need for a wife—

**Barbara:** I think it does.

**Bob:** —but that need could be met in a variety of other ways; whereas, for a man, there aren't any other ways.

**Barbara:** There's really no other way.

**Shaunti:** There's really no other way; exactly.

**Bob:** You wrote about this subject in the book, *Rekindling the Romance*.

**Barbara:** That's right.

**Bob:** You wrote to wives and said, "We have to have a better understanding of this issue."

**Barbara:** Yes; I said that, for women, we have many avenues for fulfilling who we are as women. Our essential femaleness can be expressed through having children and nurturing them—nursing them as babies / raising them. That whole process, for a woman, is very fulfilling—it affirms me as a female. It’s what God made me to do. I can experience what God made me to do by having children.

Now, God also made me to be intimate with my husband; but it’s not the *only* thing He made me to do, as a female. I have this other avenue—where I can nurture children and even nurture other people— that is gratifying to me, as woman / that meets that emotional need that I have, as a female. It’s different for a man.

**Dennis:** And it is why, for a woman, she can say: “I just need you to hug me. That will meet my emotional need.”

**Barbara:** Yes.

**Dennis:** I don’t know that I’ve ever asked Barbara—[Laughter]

**Shaunti:** “I need a hug.”

**Dennis:** —in 32 years of marriage: “Sweetheart, I have an emotional need. Would you just hug me?”

**Barbara:** I can affirm that you’ve not asked for that one. [Laughter]

**Bob:** “Could we just cuddle tonight?”—you haven’t heard that?

**Barbara:** No; I’ve not heard that. No; that’s correct. [Laughter]

[Studio]

**Bob:** That was—you’d been 32 years, at that point—so I’m doing the math—

**Dennis:** I haven’t asked her in the last 12 years, either. [Laughter]

**Bob:** —about cuddling?

**Dennis:** —no cuddling. [Laughter] No; no doubt about it.

We’re talking about the top five romantic needs of a woman. Number one, she needs an intimate relationship with her husband. Number two, she needs affection—nonsexual affection. Third, she needs to feel protected, cared for, and most importantly, she needs to feel *safe* with *you*, as her husband.

That really leads us to number four: “Your wife needs time and focused attention.” It’s why the child-bearing and child-rearing years are so difficult, Bob, with all of our busyness in our schedules. It’s hard for a woman to let go, let down, and allow her mind to move toward her man. It’s why a guy is wise if he finds a way to be able to connect with her and give her some focused attention—and maybe begin to pull her out of her world a bit, into his, by taking a walk together.

That’s one of the things Barbara and I did at the end of work as we were raising our kids. They knew that when Dad got home from work that they’d go for a walk in the garden. They’d look at the flowers that were blooming; or in some cases, we just looked at what used to bloom and now was dead because of the drought or whatever. We’d just talk. It was a time to decompress together, and just to give us ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, as a couple, together.

**Bob:** It is hard for a wife to be spontaneous in this area; isn’t it? I mean, it’s hard for her in the moment to just, all of a sudden, have an urge and run with it. It’s not that it *never* happens; but more often than not, it’s something a wife has needed some time to process, and think about, and get ready for and prepare for.

**Dennis:** Well, someone has compared it to a crockpot.

**Bob:** —versus a microwave.

**Dennis:** Yes; you turn on a microwave, and you’re over and done in two minutes, you know—but with a crockpot, it’s a lengthy period of time. That’s why, as we mentioned earlier in the broadcast, it’s a wise man who flirts with his wife during the day—maybe sends her a text and says: “I love you,” “I appreciate you,” “I like this about you,” or “When I get home tonight, I want to talk about what your top needs are, right now, as a wife / as a woman, in this stage of our marriage and family.”

Bob, I know that one of the things Barbara loves to do—she likes to get calendars out and plan. It’s because we don’t do it enough, and we’re living a very *full* life. She likes to know where we’re going / where we’re headed, and likes to understand what’s being expected of her.

**Bob:** One of the things we featured on *FamilyLife Today* over the years was a teaching series from our friend, Tommy Nelson, as he taught through the Book, Song of Solomon. Tommy is the pastor at Denton Bible Church and has served there for decades now.

Dennis, he made the point that this area of marriage—even though we are different, even though we approach intimacy differently, even though it may be a lower priority for a wife than it is for her husband—this is not something you can just say: “Oh well. We

just won't make this important in our marriage." He said, "This has to be something that you prioritize and put a high value on."

**Dennis:** You build a fire in the fireplace, and make sure your home is where that takes place. It creates warmth for the whole relationship.

Let's listen to Tommy Nelson.

[Previous Interview]

**Tommy:** There needs to be legitimate passion—it had better be there. I am a believer in this—a lot of guys aren't—but I *am*. When I say to a couple: "Love the Lord?" "Yes." "You walking with God? Are you heading to do great things?" "Yes." "Tell me about your physical purity. Are you staying pure?" That guy says to me, "Well, we have no real temptation." I say, "We have a problem!" [Laughter] There is an intimacy, a passion, an excitement that has to be there; because where there isn't, that gets really old really quick. You see, the marriage bed is the follow-through on all of the spiritual, emotional, social love that you have.

All of the delight that you feel in that woman—that has given herself and loved you—the delight of it is shown in a physical expression on the marital bed. When a woman has such appreciation for that man, who goes out in that pit and works and struggles, the follow-through is in the marital bed. When that isn't there—there is a problem.

In the Song of Solomon, they're not married until Chapter 4. There are things said in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3 by this single woman that are exciting indeed. She *longs* for him—that has to be there.

[Studio]

**Bob:** Yes; that's Tommy Nelson from his Song of Solomon teaching series. That does need to be there in a marriage relationship. If it's *not* there, you need to get some help with that.

**Dennis:** Well, there needs to be excitement in the marriage relationship. I'll tell you—so much of this is built around two people who trust each other and who respect each other. That's number five of the top five romantic needs of a woman—and that's that she needs a man that she respects. It's one of the man's greatest needs, Bob. If that's in place, then you have a real opportunity, I think, for that fire to be built in a fireplace—and where there is passion ignited between a husband and a wife and continues to flourish in the marriage relationship.

You're not going to have it every time you're together—you're not going to have fireworks going off—but you need to have them occasionally.



**Bob:** Our hope today has been that husbands would better understand what their wives are thinking and feeling when it comes to marital intimacy. My question for you, Dennis, is: “If a wife has been listening and she says: ‘You know, this ceased to be a priority long ago. I’m going through the motions, but I could really be done with this for the rest of my life and that would be okay with me.’”

**Dennis:** I think she’s not alone. I think there are a lot of women, right now, in marriages, where they’re nodding their heads. They’ve given up, and they’ve tossed the towel in, and they’re not trying anymore. This is a dangerous place to be in a marriage relationship—it really is.

You know, it takes a husband and a wife, both, asking God, “Do a work in my heart, that I would be teachable and that I would be obedient to Jesus Christ to be the kind of husband / to be the kind of wife he needs me to be in this marriage relationship.” It may mean that you pray a prayer like this: “God, make me willing to be willing.” He’ll meet you at that point, but you need to be willing for Him to make you willing.

**Bob:** You know, I think one way for a husband and wife to really start to build back into their marriage—if this is an area of marriage where things had not been going well for you—plan some date nights together, where the date activity is designed to strengthen your marriage.

We have taken four sessions from an event we held recently called *I Still Do*® that featured Alistair Begg, Alex Kendrick, Crawford and Karen Loritts, and Dennis Rainey—we’ve taken their messages and we’ve put them together in an *I Still Do* On Demand package, where you can sign up and have 30 days’ access to these messages. Over those 30 days, plan four date nights, where the two of you sit down and watch these messages / watch a different one on each date. What’ll happen is—you’ll be growing in your understanding of each other / God’s design for marriage and what the Bible has to say about it—and that’ll cause you to grow closer. This is a great Valentine’s activity. You could do this on Valentine’s eve and then continue it throughout the rest of the month.

You could do it with other couples—do it with your whole church! But it’s available for On Demand viewing. You can find out more when you go to [FamilyLifeToday.com](http://FamilyLifeToday.com) and click the information about *I Still Do*, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY. If you order the four messages On Demand, we will send you an additional resource—it’s our “Simply Romantic Nights” resource, which is designed to give you some creative ideas for additional date nights after you’ve been through the *I Still Do* videos.

All of that is our way to get you dating one another more regularly during 2017. Again, find out more when you go to [FamilyLifeToday.com](http://FamilyLifeToday.com). Look for the information about *I Still Do*, or call if you have questions at 1-800-FL-TODAY.

You know, as we think about heading toward our 25<sup>th</sup> birthday as a radio broadcast, and think about having been on the air for almost 25 years now, it's remarkable; because it has been a partnership throughout that time. *FamilyLife Today* has been heard on hundreds of stations all around the country, and is now heard worldwide, because of listeners, like you, who say, "This information, this content, this biblical teaching about marriage and family is important for me, for my marriage, for my family; but it's also important for our community."

When you help support the ministry of *FamilyLife Today*, you're making this kind of practical biblical help and hope for marriages and families available to tens of thousands of couples you may never meet—people in your community and people all around the world. We want to say, "Thank you for your partnership with us in this ministry."

In fact, if you can help with a donation today, whether it's a first-time donation or your first gift as one of our new Legacy Partners, giving monthly in support of this ministry, we'd love to send you a copy of Dennis and Barbara Rainey's devotional book for couples, called *Moments with You*. It's our thank-you gift when you donate, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com or when you call to donate at 1-800-FL-TODAY. Again, we are grateful for your linking arms with us in this ministry.

And we hope you can join us back tomorrow when we're going to talk about the five romantic needs every husband has. 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 next time for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas.  
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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