



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Fueling the Passion in Your Marriage – Part 2

Guest(s): Bill and Pam Farrel

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson, and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, food that lacks spice and color is usually not terribly enjoyable to eat, and it actually may not be very healthy for you either. Well, in a similar way, a marriage that lacks intimacy and joy is not healthy at all. God intended for us to develop strong marriages, ones with deep spiritual, physical, and emotional closeness. And that's why today's classic conversation here on Family Talk is so important.

Dr. Dobson will be once again joined by his guests, Bill and Pam Farrel, and they'll be discussing with the Bible says about intimacy and also some of the ways that the enemy might be trying to rob your marriage of that intimacy. Bill and Pam Farrel share pretty openly about their experiences. If you have little ones around, you might want to save this broadcast for later and listen to it when little ears won't hear adult themes being discussed. Now, in yesterday's broadcast, the Farrels reminded us that marital intimacy is a gift from God, which is essential to bind couples together.

What do you do when things aren't "working" as well as you'd hoped? Well, Bill and Pam have some tips for how to improve the physical intimacy part of your marriage, and they're going to be sharing those in just a moment. Bill and Pam Farrel are international speakers, authors, and relationship experts. Together, they have authored over 40 books, including the best-seller *Men Are Like Waffles and Women Are Like Spaghetti*. Their books, in fact, have been translated into over 14 languages and have impacted thousands of married couples the world over.

Today's conversation is based on their bestselling book called *Red-Hot Monogamy*. And after more than 30 years of marriage, they have a lot to share on this subject. Let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guests Bill and Pam Farrel right here, right now on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let me start with this question, Bill and Pam, you say in your book that you really ought to schedule a time for sexual expression at least once a week, that

you ought to set that aside. Because if not, the cares of life will run right past you. You talk about it openly with one another. This is not just something done in your own head in the dark of night. This is something that you bring into the relationship openly and talk through the times that you have together.

What really surprised me, I haven't heard anybody say this before, is that those times when you are together ought to be spent, or some of them, talking about the finances and the children and the things that usually are recommended to be avoided when you're about to have intimacy. How do you come up with that?

Pam Farrel: Well, Dr. Dobson, we looked at intimacy and to have a truly red-hot romantic relationship, you have to deal with all the issues. Social intimacy, that means having new experiences together so you're not just bored with each other year after year. Financial intimacy, if you're fighting over money, there's not going to be a lot of red-hot romance going on.

Bill Farrel: One of the things I found is when I said, "Pam, I want to be financially intimate with you. I don't just want to manage the budget. I want to be financially intimate with you," what I discovered is that Pam spends money according to her personality, and I love her personality. Now, if I just look at it as the money, part of her personality, she's pretty spontaneous. If I were to look at, wow, she spends money spontaneously, I don't want her to do that, but when I realized, you know what, that's an expression of her personalities, I can work with this.

Dr. James Dobson: What if she has a flamboyant personality and spends money flamboyantly?

Bill Farrel: Well, I think we all know you can't just say the money well is unlimited, so just go. But at the same time, that individual probably married her because he likes her flamboyance. If you can bring that into the discussion, how are we going to manage this flamboyant personality you have in all the areas of life? He probably likes it in the bedroom, probably likes it in the way she dresses, probably doesn't like in the way she spends money.

Dr. James Dobson: All right, let's get more specific. You scheduled Thursday night as time to be together sexually and emotionally. At least some of the time you suggest that you start out by talking about these tough issues and problems. You're not going to wind up driving each other away?

Pam Farrel: We schedule red-hot monogamy like let's say Thursday night is our date night, but we have a separate time Tuesday morning where we have breakfast and we handle the business side of life-

Dr. James Dobson: Okay, so they're not done back to back.

Pam Farrel: -and that's where we do the discussion. That's right. One leads to the other. We want those discussions in parental intimacy so that you're raising the kids on the

same page, emotional intimacy. We have little getaways and we describe what to do on those getaways to work out those bugs. At the end of that getaway, now you're on the same page and you want some red-hot monogamy.

Dr. James Dobson: All right, so you're really defusing the tension that has developed over those issues.

Pam Farrel: Exactly.

Bill Farrel: Yes, because we know some of those issues take time. We know that some of those issues take a lot of time, because some of those issues get ingrained in who we are. Having grown up again in broken situations in the past, we have triggers in our life. If I ever get around a woman that doesn't make sense, I don't mean just an emotional woman, but somebody, the thoughts aren't connecting, I flash back to those days with my mom.

I start to have this reaction inside that has very little to do now with anything Pam's doing. Well, sometimes that gets in the way. We want to be able to say, "You know what? Even with those issues going on, we're not going to demand that that gets completely solved before we celebrate the fact that we're working on it together."

Dr. James Dobson: Bill, let's suppose that the mood is right and you're not sure exactly how to tell Pam that. Pam, let's suppose that you have a headache and you're not real sure. You think you see something coming, you're not real sure that you want it to be. How do you guys talk about, how should married couples talk about things like that?

Pam Farrel: We take our clues from the Song of Solomon and one of the things that they did is they had a code when they wanted each other. In the Song of Songs, it talks about the garden, and that's kind of a euphemism for baby, I want you. We encourage couples to create their own code so that it gets things clear when you have that desire for one another. It can be really fun. Like this one couple, they went... They'd been some stress and so he's like, "Okay, we need to have some time together."

He took her away and they spent the whole day together and the kids were at his sister's house who's single. He looks down, they ended up just going to the park, having a great conversation, and feeding the ducks. When he looked down at his watch, he's like, "Oh no, we were supposed to go get the kids." They went in and picked up the kids and his sister said, "Oh, how did things go?" Because she's thinking...

Bill Farrel: He's going, "It's fine. We just fed the ducks."

Pam Farrel: She's like, "Oh, fed the ducks, huh?" He came back out and he's like, "My sister thinks that we had sex and she called it feeding the ducks." That became a code

word, feed the ducks. For us, ours came out of our book, *Men Are Like Waffles - Women Are Like Spaghetti*, because men and women process stress differently. Men like to go their favorite boxes to rest and recharge. God helped us girls out and that most of men's favorite boxes are shaped like boxes, like the TV screen is shaped like a box.

The computer screen is shaped like a box. The garage is shaped like a box. The refrigerator is shaped like a box. Football field is shaped like a box. The bed is shaped like a box. In fact, that sex box is a guy's favorite box to go to when he's stressed. It's kind of like that free square in the middle of a bingo card. If I can get there, I'll score on his waffle. Well, when we were presenting that at a conference early on, every time we came to the area of sexual intimacy after that, the crowd would yell, bingo!

Now that's like our code word. You want to play some bingo? Your code words might change over time too. Ours used to be, you want to take a nap? Well, we're over 40 now, so you want to take a nap means do you want to take a nap? We can't use that code word anymore. My favorite though has got to be this sweet shy lady, and she couldn't even come to say any code word out loud. She just writes a number on the top of the mirror every morning between one and 10 how interested she is in red-hot monogamy that day.

The first place her husband goes to check is the mirror every day. If it's one, honey, you might as well go golfing after work. If it's 10, ooh, he runs home at lunchtime.

- Dr. James Dobson: In your book, you talk about pillows, with a pillow that has I think...
- Pam Farrel: Tonight or not tonight?
- Dr. James Dobson: Tonight and not tonight. What happens if you say tonight and your teenager comes walking in and sees the pillow? What do you tell?
- Pam Farrel: Oh, that's too funny. Our son, when he was in college, I gave Bill some socks that were for me that said tonight or not tonight.
- Bill Farrel: If you roll down the top of it, it says not tonight. If you roll them up, it says tonight.
- Pam Farrel: Right. I think our son captured it. He's like, "If you need socks to clue him in, there's something wrong in your relationship."
- Bill Farrel: Well, we wanted our kids to know that this was a very healthy part of a marriage relationship. Early on when our kids were young, we set aside Thursday nights. There was a collection of toys that our kids could only play with on Thursday night and they had to play with them in bed.

Dr. James Dobson: Did they ever figure it out?

Bill Farrel: Oh yeah. Early on they figured it out.

Pam Farrel: They were a little bit older, but the good part is they want to protect their intimate life, so they've made really wise choices in their own relationships. Our son Brock was dating Hannah, who he ended up. She's our precious daughter-in-law. The first time we were meeting the two families was at ICRS, which is the big booksellers convention. Everybody's coming into town and Brock, we're all out to dinner.

And then after dinner, Brock walks Hannah back to where she's sitting with her folks, then walks back home. Well, he got caught in this torrential rain in Atlanta. Bill and I were upstairs. We had some appointments coming up. Bill was already at his appointment and I was getting ready for an evening appointment. I hung that do not disturb sign on the door, and Brock trudges up the hallway. He's soaking wet and he sees this do not disturb sign. I can hear him outside saying, "Oh man! I can't interrupt my parents, but I'm soaking wet."

I just opened the door. I started laughing. I'm like, "It's okay. It's just me here." I said, "But isn't it great that at 21 the first thing on your mind is that you might be interrupting your parents' red-hot monogamy?"

Bill Farrel: The first part of keeping the romantic life alive is you just check in with each other. We have a tendency just to say, "Okay, the kid's taken care of, or the bill's done, or is the schedule taken care of," and we never stop to say, "So how are you today?" The first part just starts checking in every day to stay in sync. Because if you're only in sync one night a week, that's all you got and it gets robbed from you, it's a big disappointment.

But if it's part of the picture, that 10 or 20 minutes a day we're checking in, and sometimes that turns spontaneous, because the time is right and all of the circumstances are right. You couldn't have ever planned it. But because we're checking in with each other, the opportunity arose.

Pam Farrel: We've actually seen that we need to plan twice as much time as we think. We put two date nights in because we are busy in ministry and somebody's crisis might definitely interrupt. That safeguards us by having extra time.

Dr. James Dobson: If there is one word that I hear coming through what you all are saying, it's preparation. You don't just climb into bed at the end of the day and all of a sudden the subject introduces itself. You haven't talked. You haven't been together. You haven't connected emotionally. A man can function very well in that mode. A woman usually can't.

Bill Farrel: See, we don't date that way. When we're dating, we're constantly trying to love the person we're dating. And then we get married and we think it's okay to just

do it an hour here, an hour there. One of the secrets is especially as a man to try to constantly love his wife. Stay in contact through phone calls and send emails and getting routines of getting flowers if she likes flowers or finding things to say to her that you just say over and over and over again so she never forgets.

Dr. James Dobson: You mentioned in the first program that you have a lot of ideas for how to put romance in your life in *Red-Hot Monogamy*. I'm sort of reluctant to read them because they're pretty intimate.

Pam Farrel: I have some of the G rated ones over here.

Dr. James Dobson: Some of these suggestions are not X-rated or R rated, they're just good common sense. But number 71, leave love notes between the pages of a book or magazine that your mate is reading. Just a way of saying that I love you. And that is in itself a tool for building intimacy, especially for a woman.

Pam Farrel: It doesn't happen overnight. That's one of the things that from Song of Solomon, and we took a clue there, is that he built anticipation. He made romance like a game.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, wouldn't you like to suggest that couples read the song of Solomon together?

Pam Farrel: Actually, that's one of the 200 ideas.

Bill Farrel: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Of course, Solomon had a thousand concubines and wives.

Pam Farrel: Yeah. He blew it after the first one.

Dr. James Dobson: He ought to know something about it. I don't really understand the man at that stage.

Pam Farrel: Yeah, yeah, he made some poor choices after wife one.

Bill Farrel: But the Song of Solomon is written during those innocent years when they were devoted to one another and when they really were trying to figure out, how do we make a marriage that works well?

Dr. James Dobson: Is there anything off limits? Is there anything you do not say to your spouse? Is there anything that is a real turnoff? And if so, what is it?

Pam Farrel: That's probably one of the most asked questions, Dr. Dobson, is what is okay behind that bedroom door? It's probably the number one question we are ever asked. When I encourage women and men to read *Red-Hot Monogamy*, I'm like, read it with a highlighter in one hand and a Sharpie in the other. The things that

you really like, underline and the things you're like not in my lifetime, Sharpie them out. I mean, that's part of the conversation that you need to have is what is okay between us. Bill has some biblical things.

Bill Farrel: Intimate relationships are very intense, whereas self-disclosure is very important and sharing all the details of our lives with each other is very important. What really makes intimacy work is that intensity gets matched with compassion. What often happens in marital relationships is we get critical of each other and we get demanding of each other. When you do that, it cuts off the intimacy. It's important that we share with each other, but timing is everything.

Not all the struggles that I was working through we were ready to talk about in the first year of our marriage. And as we've matured together, we've been able to have more mature conversations about how growing up in the home I grew up affected me and how Pam's background affects her, but we couldn't uncover all that in the first year as we were just exploring how...

Dr. James Dobson: That's why it's silly to say that you should live together before you're married.

Pam Farrel: Oh, it's the worst thing you can do.

Dr. James Dobson: It's the worst thing you can do. You know the second worst thing? In fact, when I asked the question a minute ago about the things that should not occur in the sexual relationship is pornography.

Pam Farrel: That's right.

Bill Farrel: Absolutely.

Pam Farrel: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: It's like a drug. Pornography is like a drug. It'll give you a high. It really will. And for a time it'll give you a ride. And like drugs, it will burn out the relationship.

Pam Farrel: It'll suck the life out of it.

Dr. James Dobson: It is not a good idea, especially because men and women see pornography differently. The man being more physically oriented can begin to make demands of his wife that she's not prepared to deliver on. It just creates chaos. I'm telling you, folks, I know something about this.

Bill Farrel: Yes, you do.

Dr. James Dobson: I have studied it for many years, served on a commission on pornography, and I'm telling you, don't go there. It's very possible for the man especially to get flat out hooked on it, and then he doesn't need his wife anymore because he's off

doing his own thing. You addressed this in the book, and I certainly agree with you.

Pam Farrel: We do. We do. We totally agree with all your research, and that's the worst thing. It pulls the plug on your whole intimate life. That's why the question really has to be answered is, well, what does God think is okay? Because couples want to know, will that spice our my love life. No, it won't. What does God say is okay then?

Bill Farrel: It's amazing to me, I've been working as a pastor my whole adult life, and one thing that amazes me is how little God says about sex when you consider how much of a problem it's been for the human race. You would think that God would have long discussions about it. But it seems pretty clear that it comes down to every intimate act between a married couple should be an act of love, that it's something we do for the other person, not taken on selfishly.

Second, everything that's done between a husband and wife ought to be agreed upon, because that's what brings honor and respect into the bedroom is we're free to discuss whatever we want, but there needs to be agreement before we actually try it. And then the third one, which we didn't share early on in our ministry, but now we share all the time is it needs to just be the two of you. There needs to not be other people there, and there needs to not be pornography there, because those ruin the secret and the power.

It is the secret. It amazes me, people will have the courage to bring all that into their bedroom. They'll bring pornography in, but they don't have the courage to talk about their intimate life. It's really a false step of courage to even venture out into that. The real power is in the discussion.

Dr. James Dobson: What we are hearing for many years, and it is so sad, is a situation where the man was more or less addicted to pornography when they got married. It came out of adolescence, an early masturbatory activity that just continues into marriage. The wife is not. She is offended and turned off by this, and this is the centerpiece of his sexual experience. It just drives a tremendous wedge between the two of them. It is sad because it is destroying marriages. You know this.

Bill Farrel: Well, it's the male killer. I believe having worked as a pastor that one of the reasons why it's hard to get people to serve is they're afraid they're going to get exposed.

Pam Farrel: The skeletons in the closet and the door might get opened.

Dr. James Dobson: You cannot break that habit alone. You're going to have to have help, and the way to get help is accountability. You can't go tell everybody this. You don't get up in the pulpit and tell everybody you're addicted to pornography because

that's all they'll think about when they see you or your kids. You can't do that. You select godly men and have them hold you accountable.

When you come back from a trip, they ask you, when you're in the hotel room, what did you watch? Were there any moments that you're ashamed of in your relationship with another woman? It's hard even in those circumstances. When it's at its worst, there needs to be intensive counseling because this is a tough one. This is like a drug addiction. It's a tough one.

Bill Farrel: I would add to it, a lot of men want to go tell their wives and keep it there. I'm going to tell you because I trust you, but we're not going to tell anybody this. If a wife hears that, she really should say, "Well, do you want to call for help or do you want me to, because we're not going to leave it at this?" Because again, it just is insidious. Like you said, it's an addiction.

Dr. James Dobson: If she doesn't say anything, she becomes an enabler.

Pam Farrel: Yes. And also, it's real easy for women to turn it on themselves, "Oh, I wasn't thin enough. I wasn't sexy enough," whatever. At that point, she needs to say, "No. That's a lie from the enemy. I'm not going to believe that. In fact, even if he says that to me, I'm not going to believe that. I'm going to proclaim the truth of who I am right now and I'm going to proclaim the truth of what Jesus wants for our marriage." If I find my husband connected to pornography, walk in and the internet's on, the best thing to say is, "Honey, I love us too much for this to come between us.

Are you going to call for help or am I?" You hold out the phone and then you say, "You know what? I'm not going to let Satan rob from us. I'm not going to turn this on me." Because when pornography entered our home, that was one loss. If I turn this on me and become like all introspective and think I'm not good enough, that's two losses. And that will make me feel distant from my husband, then that'll be three losses.

If that distance continues, we might end up divorced. That's four losses. And if we end up divorced, then our kids will pay. That's five losses and we're not going to let Satan do that.

Dr. James Dobson: Pam, when you do that, expect anger because you'll probably get it. That's the point at which love must be tough.

Pam Farrel: Exactly. I know a great book by that title.

Dr. James Dobson: Hey, I've heard that. I've heard of that.

Bill Farrel: Can I make a plug to the godly men that are out there? Because what often happens is we have a lot of godly men sitting in our churches that don't feel like they have anything to say to a younger generation. I just want to tell those men,

engage with the younger men, because we're Pam and I got our start is I used to go to church when we were first married and I didn't know what to do.

I would look for couples that had been married at least 20 years that looked like they were happy. I'd sit behind them in church so they had to greet me, and I'd find a way to get invited to lunch so I could ask them how they did it. I just want to say, the godly men that are out there, take an interest in younger men so that when this surfaces, they have somebody to tell.

Pam Farrel: A safety net's underneath that young couple.

Dr. James Dobson: I think we just have time for me to ask you one last question.

Pam Farrel: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: It comes out of the book and it has to do with advice that you give to women that needs to be explained, and it has to do with being a risk-taker.

Pam Farrel: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you mean by that?

Pam Farrel: We've talked about what the counterfeit is, what Satan tries to rob from us, and we in the book talk about what are the traits of a red-hot lover, others centered, a risk-taker, God focused, attentive, self-aware, mature. Those are the traits of a red-hot lover. If a woman truly loves as Christ loves, she'll take her eyes off of herself and she'll put her eyes on her husband and she'll say, "What can I do, what can I say that will encourage you, honey?"

She'll be willing to risk a little bit, maybe outside of her comfort zone a little bit, and she'll listen to her spouse and be willing to try some unique things. Again, we've talked about it has to be agreed upon. If you're not comfortable yet, say okay, give me a couple of other ideas.

Dr. James Dobson: Unique things, you're talking about sexual experimentation, which as long as it's within the marital relationship.

Pam Farrel: Right. Exactly. It could be as simple as turn the lights on.

Dr. James Dobson: Mutually exciting, agreed upon, then that's a good thing.

Pam Farrel: It is. Anytime a woman takes her eyes off of herself and focuses on her spouse, anytime a husband takes his eyes off of himself and focuses on his wife, that will produce red-hot monogamy.

Dr. James Dobson: What a note to end on here. Hey, thank you all. This has been very, very interesting. I have loved having you here. We'll do it again. The name of the

book is *Red-Hot Monogamy: Making Your Marriage Sizzle*, and there is some sizzle in this book. We didn't talk about all of it, but some of it's there. Bill and Pam Farrel are holding seminars on this subject and are being used by the Lord to strengthen marriage and strengthen the physical relationship of marriage. Thank you for this two day discussion. It's been very enlightening, and we'll do it again.

Bill Farrel: Thank you very much.

Pam Farrel: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, whether you need to put the sizzle back into your expression of intimacy, or if you just need to add a little bit more, doing so will positively impact each of you as spouses and improve the overall strength of your marriage. That was the conclusion of a classic broadcast featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Bill and Pam Farrel, here on Family Talk. Now, this is one of the most popular broadcasts we've aired in quite some time. And if you'd like to listen again or perhaps share it with your spouse, all you have to do is visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. I'm Roger Marsh. And from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you so much for making us a part of your day today. Have a great weekend, and be sure to join us again Monday right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.