



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Fueling the Passion in Your Marriage – Part 1

Guest(s): Bill and Pam Farrel

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh.

Have you ever wondered how a couple can have a successful marriage? If you're married and you and your spouse are more like roommates conducting the business of the family, well, turn this program all the way up. God intended for your marriage to be a Christ-centered partnership filled with deep connection, love, and intimacy.

On today's classic program, Dr. Dobson is joined by his guests, Bill and Pam Farrel, and they'll be discussing the subject of marital intimacy. God wants us to strengthen every part of our marriages and developing more intimacy with your spouse is an important part of that. So if you have little ones around, you might want to put some headphones on for this one or listen to the show from our website at a later time.

Now, our guests today here on Family Talk, Bill and Pam Farrel, have authored over 40 books, including the best-seller *Men Are Like Waffles and Women Are Like Spaghetti*. They're international speakers, best-selling authors, and relationship experts who are also the founders of the Love-Wise Ministry, which seeks to build stronger marriages. Bill and Pam Farrel have three grown children and a growing number of grandchildren as well.

Now, the Farrels use humor and relatable personal stories to help couples understand how to communicate better and develop stronger intimacy that will carry a marriage through for a lifetime. In fact, today's broadcast is based on their bestselling book with the provocative title, *Red-Hot Monogamy*. So let's join Dr. James Dobson and Bill and Pam Farrel right here, right now on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: We sat and talked in my office before coming down here, and Pam, you said you've been listening to us for a long, long time.

Pam Farrel: Oh, I'm going to get emotional again every time I say this, but Bill and I come from pretty broken backgrounds and we look at our marriage ministry now and our happy marriage and we credit you, Dr. Dobson, because even as engaged couples and newlyweds, we watched your film series and raised our kids on all your books, and so it's just a delight.

Dr. James Dobson: That was the first film series, the film series. The one that really started it all, and you were out there watching, and now here you are as a guest on the program all these years.

Pam Farrel: So I hope it's encouraging that the fruit remains from your wonderful ministry.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're doing a great job. You're speaking, you have conferences all over the country, speak at churches. Pam, did you ever think that you all would be in a ministry to married couples?

Pam Farrel: It is really a miracle. Bill and I feel like our marriage is a miracle. Actually, the title of our book, *Red-Hot Monogamy*, happened at our 25th wedding anniversary. Our friend Anita-

Dr. James Dobson: Do you really want to tell us about this?

Pam Farrel: Well, I do. It's a cute little story. So our friend Anita Renfroe came out and she was doing the music for our celebration, for our anniversary, and she stood up and she's like, "We're here to celebrate Pam and Bill's righteous red-hot monogamy." And we had just contracted to do a book on marital intimacy, and the whole table looked at us and said, "That's the title."

Dr. James Dobson: That's it.

Pam Farrel: And then Anita came down and she said, "You can use that for a title." And right after that, our son Brock got up and he said-

Bill Farrel: Our oldest son got up to pray over the food. And he said, "Hi, I'm Brock Farrel and I'm the first product of my parents' righteous red-hot monogamy."

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley kids often about the fact that I reveal everything in our relationship and that we only have three secrets left, and if I ever reveal one of those, she's out of here. She said that one night and Ryan was then asked to speak and he came to the microphone and he said, "Yeah, they've only got three secrets and I'm one of them."

Pam Farrel: Oh, that's so cute. That's so cute.

Dr. James Dobson: But you said Pam a minute ago that you all came out of broken homes yourself.

Pam Farrel: We did.

Dr. James Dobson: What was that like and how did you come together?

Pam Farrel: I am the daughter of an alcoholic. My daddy loved me and he sacrificed greatly for me, but he had a pain deep in his heart and he chose to answer that pain with alcohol rather than a relationship with God. And because of that, he had this underlying anger and rage issues. So I never knew who I was going to get when I got home, whether it be Jekyll or Hyde. I grew up in this very volatile home, but God was so gracious that my mom's best friend was the secretary of a little teeny tiny church, and my mom had all kinds of spiritual questions. Neither my parents were believers. And my mom said, "Kathy, you have some things in your life that I really love." She was seeing things like love, joy, the fruit of the spirit, basically. And Kathy's like, "Why don't you come to church and bring the kids?"

And so that began my introduction to Christianity. When I was eight years old, a pastor came in and said, "Who wants to learn more about Jesus?" And I'm like, "Oh, I think we get Christmas because of that guy. Okay, I'll go to your classes." And I was memorizing Matthew 5, 6 and 7 to have a place on Bible quiz team. My parents were arguing, my dad had been drinking and I had just memorized Psalm 23, and they gave me this little cross that glowed in the dark, and on it says, "He lives." And so I was sitting there memorizing Matthew 5, 6 and 7, and I came across this verse and it says, "If you ask, you shall receive. If you seek, you'll find. If you knock, the door will be open to you."

I remember praying, "Jesus, does that mean if I ask you to come into my life that you would be my best friend, my savior, and my Lord? Because that's what I want." And just then my dad was out of control and it got real scary, so I shut off the light and across the room that little cross was glowing in the dark, and I prayed, "Jesus, the pastor says that you're bigger than anything, that You're stronger than anything. You're more powerful than death itself. If that is true, and I believe that it is, I want You to come into my life and make me the kind of woman that you design me to be. And I want to grow up in a house, not like this house where that's full of rage and anger. I want to grow up in a house and have a family that's full of love and joy and peace and patience and kindness. So please come into my life. And P.S. God, if you could arrange it, I'd like to marry a pastor someday. Amen."

Dr. James Dobson: Did you? You were eight?

Pam Farrel: And I was eight. Almost nine.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Pam Farrel: And I believe that God answered the cries of that little girl's heart, both those requests to my pastor husband.

Dr. James Dobson: Bill, what were you doing at that time?

Bill Farrel:

Well, I grew up in a home, my mom was a dominant personality in my home. Very high energy, very strong personality, but had been through some very difficult things in her growing up years. And as a result, her life was run by fear. And if you can imagine being afraid of it, my mom was afraid of it. And it just continued to escalate throughout my life. I was the third youngest in the family, so I had watched my brother and sister fight with my mom, and my conclusion was they didn't nearly have the energy my mom had, so they lost every argument they ever had. So I went the other direction. I just kind of shut things down in my life, and I became nonresponsive to my mom, nonresponsive to a lot of things in life, because that's where my protection was, and found a refuge in sports in high school and figured that if I was real busy in sports, I wouldn't have to be home and not thinking much about life, but just as lost as lost could be.

And my sophomore year in high school, a good friend of mine said, "Hey Bill, you want to spend the night at my house? My dad's going to take us to a new movie that's out." And I said, "Well, sure. What's the movie?" And he said, "Well, the movie's The Exorcist." So I went to that movie with this friend of mine, and I took the high school athlete attitude. "I can handle it. No matter what you throw at me, I can handle it." And when I sat in that movie and started watching this depiction of something that... I'd heard it was based on something true, even though I knew Hollywood certainly had overdone it. But as I was sitting in that movie theater, I realized nobody ever told me about this world. And I know nothing about what I'm watching, but I've heard it's based on something true.

And then the other thought that got me is I looked at the girl on the screen, I said, "I can't see any difference between her and me. So if anything like that could happen to her, what would keep it from happening to me?" And I had no answers. And when I got home, I had nobody to ask because I knew my mom didn't know. My dad had just kind of gone passive in the situation, and my mom had isolated our life down because of fear. So I didn't know any pastors. I didn't know anybody I'd consider a mentor. But my mom grew up in Georgia, so I had a Bible. So I started reading the Bible, I started sleeping with the Bible, and 30 days after I saw the movie, up four or five times every night, I read 1 John 4:4. It says, "Greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world." And the light went on.

Dr. James Dobson:

How old were you?

Bill Farrel:

I was 16, and I knew my brother had prayed some kind of a prayer a couple months before. So I went to his room, I said, "How do you do this?" And he said, "Well, if you admit you're a sinner and you need a savior and you ask Jesus to come into your life and forgive you for what you've done and give you eternal life, He'll do it." So I went, "Good enough." So I went back to my room, got on my knees, prayed that prayer, and I was hoping for the big light show. I wanted angels and bells and whistles, and none of that happened. But I slept through the night that night for the first time since I'd seen the movie, and I got up the

next morning and I realized something has happened in my heart, and I started chasing Jesus at that point, trying to figure out what He had done.

- Dr. James Dobson.: Well, this is a very good place to start our discussion of marriage because in essence, you both brought baggage, a lot of it, into the relationship.
- Bill Farrel: Yes.
- Pam Farrel: Oh, yeah.
- Dr. James Dobson: That affects the sexual relationship as well as every other aspect. So when you're speaking to couples out there, you have to begin with the assumption that they didn't start at the same place. They started in a hole. They started with experiences from childhood that are still with them, and you almost have to begin with that before you get to the physiological aspect of sexual relations, don't you?
- Pam Farrel: Exactly. Knowing that people have baggage brings a heart of compassion, and so we come knowing that we were broken and we have a great redeemer, so God can redeem anything that you give to Him.
- Dr. James Dobson: Did you have difficulties in the early days?
- Pam Farrel: We were so privileged to have met through Campus Crusade for Christ at a leadership conference, so that was a good starting point. And then we were mentored in seminary by Jim and Sally Conway. We had some good mentors that really helped us, and so we could have been a lot worse off. We had some great teams.
- Bill Farrel: And we had some pretty dramatic moments.
- Pam Farrel: Oh, yeah. I was a drama queen, totally, the first couple years of marriage. I mean, I had this huge vacuum in my heart and insecurities running, and so Bill... Okay, this is an example that I usually don't confess to, talk about secrets, but the last night of our honeymoon before we're going to a reception in Idaho, romantic dinner, then we do what honeymooners usually do, and then I start talking about every boyfriend I've ever had since kindergarten. And I mean, it's like 1:00 in the morning. And every once in a while I'd be like, "You're awake? You still love me, right? You're awake?"
- Bill Farrel: I'm doing my best to try to listen to all this, but my eyes are kind of rolling back in my head, but I'm trying to make sure she's important to me.
- Pam Farrel: So he falls asleep about 2:30 in the morning and I'm like, "You don't love me anymore." He's like, "Oh, yeah. I do, I do." So he sat up, and then from that moment on, I sang every country and western song I knew growing up, and it

ended with me standing on the bed singing Stand By Your Man. I mean, I was pathetic.

Dr. James Dobson: You know what? This is the honest truth. You can't tell those stories often because they're too intimate and too personal. But it's a shame that you can't because nearly everybody has a funny, meaningful honeymoon story.

Pam Farrel: Yes, exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm going to tell you mine. It's not sexual in nature, but we were in a very cheap hotel, which is the only place we could find because San Francisco was completely sold out. They had a big convention there, and there were two drunk ladies next door to us, and they were shouting and screaming. We couldn't sleep, and it got very irritating. About 3:00 in the morning, and my little feminine wife went to the window and raised it and shouted out, "Pipe down, you hags." I wonder, what have I married here? This is my introduction to a very different side of Shirley, but everybody's got a story there.

Bill Farrel: Oh, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And some of them would be hilarious if we could ever put them into a book.

Pam Farrel: A book. There you go, publishing wing.

Dr. James Dobson: And it would be X-rated, I'm afraid. But you obviously learn to accommodate each other.

Bill Farrel: Well, one of the things we're trying to tell people is nobody has a perfect marriage.

Pam Farrel: Right.

Bill Farrel: And those things that you don't get right along the way become some of your best stories. You laugh about them, and if you can keep your sense of humor and you can realize that this is a growing experience, that nobody's got it right, even though the media shows us all working well, the reality of it is we tell people sometimes marital intimacy is the greatest thing on earth, and sometimes your response is, "Well, that was awkward," because the reality of it's just a very live relationship and it exposes everything.

So it can be a great moment of healing. I know there's times when Pam and I had the hopes of being intimate, but what it turned into was a big discussion about how do we overcome the influences of our past and how do we make sure the hurts don't get in the way of our relationship? And often that is the gift that people need, not so much the physical act itself.

Dr. James Dobson: In our prayer prior to going on the air, I prayed and thanked God for this gift of marriage. It is a marvelous thing that was given to Adam and Eve in the garden right from the beginning, before the institution of the church, before the institution of government, the institution of marriage was given.

Pam Farrel: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: But it is such a marvelous gift. How come it's so much hard work? You got to work at it. You got to build it, then sometimes you build from scratch.

Pam Farrel: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: How you answer that?

Bill Farrel: Well, I think the first reason why it's hard work is because it's such a clear picture of the gospel. So it's under spiritual attack.

Pam Farrel: Especially the intimate part. Sexuality is a reflection of God loving the church. Of course Satan wants to take it over and twist it and deform it, but God gave red-hot monogamy as a gift to marriage couples. Oftentimes I say, "You know what? Sex was God's secret a long time before it was Victoria's Secret." So let's reclaim the gift.

Dr. James Dobson: We're talking to Bill and Pam Farrel, and they have written a book, a number of them, but the one we're talking about today, *Red-Hot Monogamy: Making your Marriage Sizzle*, and that's pretty racy stuff. Now, what is red-hot monogamy? I mean, we could guess, but why don't you tell us.

Pam Farrel: Right.

Bill Farrel: Well, we're trying to get the message out that the best sexual relationships are in marriage. We live in a culture that tells us that the forbidden is the exciting stuff, but all the studies are proving all the best sexual relationships are in marriage. Couples who pray together are more satisfied with their love lives than people who don't. People who attend church are more satisfied with their love lives than people who don't attend church. People who are in accountability groups, whether it's small groups or it's Bible studies, or they just get together on a regular basis to help each other figure this thing out, they have better marriages and they rate their satisfaction with their love life as higher. And we're trying to get the message out that the absolute best way to have a great, intimate relationship is to commit to a lifelong marriage and to work at it and do it well.

Dr. James Dobson: And yet the statistics show, and this is in your book, that the number one sexual problem that people have is boredom. So you've got to do some things to circumvent boredom, and your book is filled with those kinds of suggestions.

Pam Farrel: Yeah, there's 200 red-hot romantic ideas laced through the book. So if you just hit that moment, like a Valentine's or an anniversary or birthday is like, "Oh, I want to do something that's fun or new or different," at least there's some ideas to help you think outside the box, maybe.

And then also, *Red-Hot Monogamy* is based to be an eight week, make your marriage a priority, make this part of your marriage a priority. And so there's discussion questions at the end of every chapter, and not just discussion questions, but what we call hands-on homework. Pun totally intended, and that's homework that you want to do as a couple. And so what we're saying to couples is, you know what? Turn off the TV and make your love life a priority, and you'll be surprised how that will fan the flame on your love life.

Dr. James Dobson: This culture mitigates against meaningful sex, doesn't it?

Bill Farrel: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Because we're exhausted, we're worn out, and there's so many other things on our minds. It's easy for days and weeks and even months to roll on without really focusing on one another. If I had to characterize your book, I think it would be to take the time to focus on the other person.

Pam Farrel: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that accurate?

Bill Farrel: One of the things we learned early on in our relationship is that if you want to have a great relationship, you have to be deliberate. It doesn't happen by accident. And it started back when we were dating because I didn't know what to do. All I knew is I don't want a relationship like what I saw growing up, and I don't want a relationship that doesn't work. So I used to have a notebook of questions that I would just go to Pam and say-

Dr. James Dobson: I didn't answer them all in my film series?

Bill Farrel: Well, this was before the film series.

Pam Farrel: We didn't know you yet.

Bill Farrel: I would just go to Pam and I'd say, "Pam, what do you think about this? And what do you think about this? And what do you think about this?" And what it taught us was if we were deliberate, life would go better.

Pam Farrel: And if we dialogued over those key areas, our relationship worked. So to invest, you reap the investments.

- Bill Farrel: So if you want to have a good romantic, sexual relationship, you just schedule it and be deliberate about it. And this is designed to help couples do that, to actually put it in your calendar and focus.
- Pam Farrel: And we encourage couples to put a little code down in your calendar. We use RHM, red-hot monogamy. So if somebody comes to us and says, "Oh, I really need an appointment with you," in our Outlook, we can look and we're like, "Oh, well, I already have a prior engagement." Well, they don't know what RHM means unless they're right now listening. So we could say, "Oh, I have a prior engagement. I'll have to do that tomorrow or the next day," and I have a light at the end of my tunnel every week to say, you know what? There's going to be some really great red-hot moments with my husband, something to look forward to. I didn't get married to Bill just to pay college bills and mortgages together. I looked forward to red-hot romance.
- Dr. James Dobson: You know what? In my counseling that I've found is that there's a lot of fear in the sexual relationship. Everybody knows it's important. Everybody knows that if you mess it up, it could really affect your marriage and maybe even destroy it. Everybody knows it's a right way and a wrong way, and they don't know for sure what is really the right way, and then there is that just that awesome responsibility. "Yeah, I'm supposed to be passionate eight times a week and I'm not." It really is almost impossible in this culture, I think, to come up through the adult years without experiencing some very negative emotions about the sexual relationship, even when you love the other person. It's a shame. It's a wonderful gift, and you've dedicated yourselves to making it what God intended it to be, haven't you?
- Pam Farrel: We sure try. And for the couples that have had pain or hurt or maybe made some poor choices along the way, what we encourage them to do, *Red-Hot Monogamy* has a variety of different weekends away, planned out times together. And one of the best things that couples can do is just get at the foot of the bed and hold hands and pray and just say, "God, we didn't do everything right. We're sorry. We wish we would've had this information sooner, but this is where we are today. We're before you we're on our knees. We want you-
- Dr. James Dobson: Some people would see that as real spooky. The sexual relationship is racy at best and you're going to bring God into this? We bring these cultural attitudes, and yet being able to pray together is a way of opening your heart to each other, isn't it?
- Pam Farrel: Right.
- Bill Farrel: Well, it's one of the most intimate things a couple ever does because it's hard to be a phony in prayer. And what happens when you pray together is you see into each other's hearts and you begin to fall in love all over again. And we've done a lot of work with singles along the way too, and we tell single couples, you shouldn't spend a lot of time praying together just the two of you, because it's so intimate, it actually raises temptation. That's how powerful it is.

Pam Farrel: And one of the biblical terms for red-hot monogamy, I mean, you don't see red-hot monogamy in the Bible, you see "To know."

Dr. James Dobson: I don't recall that.

Pam Farrel: Instead, it's "To know."

Dr. James Dobson: I don't mean to interrupt you, but you think about that. Well, we're out of time, so we can't think about it long, but we'll do it next time. But the Bible refers to sexual intercourse as knowing the person. Your eyes open to who that person is through the sexual relationship. That's why it is important to get it right and to spend the time figuring out how to do that. But we're off to a good start.

Bill Farrel: Very good.

Dr. James Dobson: Pam, Bill Farrel, it's a pleasure to have you all here and to have your book Red-Hot... No, not Red-Hot Mama. *Red-Hot Monogamy* is the title. I bet you've had some fun with that title.

Pam Farrel: The funniest one is Red-Hot Mahogany. We're like, "No, no, not that."

Dr. James Dobson: Thanks for being with us today, and we'll pick it up right here next time.

Pam Farrel: Thanks.

Bill Farrel: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a great conversation for any couple, whether you've just gotten hitched or you've been united in marital bliss for many, many years. You've been listening to our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk with authors Bill and Pam Farrel, and they're just getting started.

Be sure to join us again tomorrow for why even little getaways are so important for couples. You'll also hear some advice from the Bible too. Now, if you'd like to listen to today's program again, all you have to do is visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, if you're a parent, the demands of children can put a pressure on a marriage, and parenting is certainly not for the faint of heart. Even children who are sweet and mild-mannered for most of the time come with their own set of challenges every now and again. But if your son or daughter is strong-willed and defiant, well, that child can literally wear you out emotionally and put added stress on your marriage.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to come alongside you during these important child-rearing years. We've developed a new 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called *The New Strong-*

Willed Child. This resource is designed to equip you to wisely lead your kids through even the toughest of trials. Now to sign up, remember it's absolutely free. Just go to our website at drjamesdobson.org/strongwilledchild.

Well, be sure to join us again tomorrow for the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's powerful conversation with Bill and Pam Farrel as they share more advice to bring red-hot monogamy to your marriage. You definitely won't want to miss it. Till then, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today here on Family Talk. Be sure to tune in again next time.

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

Dr. James Dobson: If your marriage seems to have lost the old spark lately, maybe it's time to make a few changes.

Roger Marsh: Here's Dr. James Dobson for Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Over the years, I've watched many happily married couples become bored and dissatisfied with each other simply because they forgot to take time out for fun. Without it, the never-ending responsibilities of adult life can become oppressive and deadening to a marriage, but to let it continue is to sacrifice something precious in your relationship.

You can prevent that from happening by making a conscious effort to put four simple ingredients back into your lives. First, make a date with your spouse this week and leave the children at home. Now, I'm not talking about an expensive night out on the town necessarily. The point is just to get away for a short while and get to know each other again.

Next, take time out for surprises. A note tucked in a briefcase or a phone call to say, "I'm thinking of you." Third, reserve some of your time and energy for a meaningful sexual relationship. Fatigue and overcommitment are destroyers of erotic behavior, even among people who love and care for one another. And finally, try to remember that the most successful marriages are those where the husband and wife respect each other and communicate that respect every day that they're together.