

#3089 – January 31, 2008 – Guest Speaker Dennis Rainey

[Rainey:] If your life ended right now, what would they say was your legacy? Would it be that of strength or that of destruction and despair?

[Easley:] Dennis Rainey, one of our featured Speakers next week at Founder's Week, and we wanted to give our friends a preview of this upcoming conference. Dennis is a long-time friend, an extra-ordinary leader within the Christian community, and has had a long-time impacted emphasis on family and marriage relationships, Jon.

[Gauger:] That's Michael Easley welcoming you to this edition of *PROCLAIM!*, and I'm Jon Gauger. And, you can tell we're pretty excited about Founder's Week coming up, an annual Bible Conference on the campus of Moody Bible Institute. But the fact that it's here and you may not be, don't let that bother you. You can take part in it when you link to our website, www.proclaim.mbn.org.

Michael, a full slate of speakers and among them Dennis Rainey who encourages us today that a strong marriage begins with a strong foundation in Christ. Let's listen to Dennis Rainey.

[Rainey:] Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it." Is that picture you right now? Are you at a crossroads? Have you come here seeking hope and help? Well, you know what? We know where that hope is. Someone once asked the question, is there anything more beautiful than life, than a young boy and girl clasping clean hands and a pure heart in the path of marriage? Can there be anything more beautiful than young love? The answer is given yes, there is a more beautiful thing. It's the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled, but still clasped. Their faces are seamed, but still radiant. Their hearts physically tired and bowed, but still strong in love and devotion for one another. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love, old love.

What's going to make the difference in your life and your marriage going the distance, 'til death do you part? The year was 1976. Barbara and I had two children under two years of age. We had just moved into a house and had changed jobs for the fifth time in six years, five moves, new friends, new churches. We moved into a house where we had been cheated out of several thousand dollars, dirty and filthy. And, amidst of cleaning up that house the phone call rang on Sunday morning, it was my brother's voice over the phone, and his voice was chilling over that telephone saying that my dad had died. Here was the man who so exemplified integrity. Hook Rainey was nickname. Hook because he had a curveball that mystified batters. Hook Rainey and his son had spent a few days together just prior to that phone call. We had put some moulding up around the, our little girl's room and neither one of us were very good at working with our hands, and we had done such a lousy job putting that moulding up we went to the hardware store to find a quarter inch putty to fill the crack between the ceiling and the moulding. We laughed all the way back from the hardware store. They didn't have a quarter inch putty.

Just like that he was taken away, died of an instant heart attack. Took my young family and went and lived out of a suitcase with my mom for three weeks. Came back home and received a short paycheck for the first time in five years in my work with Campus Crusade for Christ. After that my son was diagnosed with a need for surgery and so at one year of age we took him in for surgery. Not more than 10 days after we got him home from surgery the phone rang and my brother had had an apparent heart attack and they needed me to go back and run the family propane business in the midst of the worst winter in Midwest history. One night with the wind-chill factor of 20 degrees below zero I'm on top of a tank car unloading propane at two o'clock in the morning. And, the pitch darkness of that experience and the wind blowing in my face I looked up at heaven, I said, "What is going on here? Our lives are coming unraveled."

A couple of months later I was late for work for some reason that day. I hadn't gone to work. Stayed home and lingered a little longer and all of a sudden Barbara stuck her head down between her knees and said she felt faint; and, at that point I felt at her neck and she said her heart was racing fast and her heart was beating so fast I couldn't count the number of heartbeats. We called the emergency, the ambulance rushed over and got her, we ran to the hospital where she was entered into the cardiac unit and registered more than 300 beats a minute. Her heart continued to race uncontrollably all day. At noon her lungs began to fill up with fluid. She got asthma and the way you treat asthma is with a stimulant. Well, she didn't need a stimulant for her heart. The doctors did not know what to do. And so, all afternoon with no friends in that waiting area I prayed. And, a little widow lady in our church prayed, whose name is Kitty. Kitty prayed until four o'clock and which point she back up off her knees and she said I knew everything was okay. She said, "I knew that either Barbara had died and gone to Heaven," and that was okay, that was comforting to her. "Or, that Barbara's heart rate had reverted back to normal." At exactly four o'clock she could not have known this. The doctors had just left to go stop her heart with electric shock, but they didn't need to because God put his finger back on the heart problem. She didn't die. But for the next few months she had extra heartbeats, I had extra heartbeats, the kids had extra heartbeats. And then, we found out at the end of 30 days she was pregnant and we wondered would she be able to give birth to a healthy son. Some nine months later she gave birth to Samuel which means because we asked of God.

Now, I want to tell you in the 12 to 18-month time period that I've just described where we had financial crisis, emotional crisis, physical crisis; all those issues swirling around our lives, bombarding our union, our marriage, there was no romance, little feelings for one another. There was a lot of pain, a lot of misunderstanding between one another. I did not understand how my once healthy wife now was preoccupied with a heart problem that could take her life at any moment. And, all we had was this Book and the God of this Book, and a commitment to Him that we had made in 1972 on September 2nd that said 'til death do us part.

Some of you here are in the middle of pain. Your marriage has come through enormous trial and you are in need of reducing your life back to the basics and finding life from the life giver; Jesus Christ. Everybody in this auditorium today has a choice. You're going to leave here with a choice. Jesus spoke of this choice in a parable in the Sermon on the Mount. He said this, Matthew 7, Verses 24 and following, "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came and the streams rose, and the winds blew, and beat against that house and yet, it did not fall because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand and the rain came and the streams rose, and the winds blew, and beat against that house, and it fell," Jesus said, "with a great crash." Interesting parable. Two foundations; sand and rock. Two builders of homes; foolish and wise. Two responses; disobedience to Jesus' words and obedience. Two legacies; one whose house ended with a crash and great was its fall, another one that withstood the floods and was permanent, resilient, the strength of a nation. One common ingredient to both houses; rain, floods, and wind.

There isn't a marriage in this arena that hasn't been impacted by trouble. Maybe it's the trouble of a job loss, an illness, a physical problem, an emotional problem. Maybe it's financial difficulty, too much charging with a charge card, too many differences. Maybe for some of you it's prosperity that is eating away at the foundation of your marriage. Unmet expectations, trouble with children, depression, adultery, in-laws; the list goes on and on. The question is what kind of foundation will you build your house on?

A better question might be if you died right now, what would your legacy be? If your life ended right now, what would they say was your legacy? Would it be that of strength or that of destruction and despair?

[Gauger:] Dennis Rainey asking some tough questions today on *PROCLAIM!*. Maybe you've attended A Weekend to Remember Seminar or read one of Dennis and Barbara's books. Well, he'll be with us next week at Founder's Week, the Bible Conference that you can link up with at our website, www.proclaim.mbn.org.

But Michael, Dennis is not alone in this line-up of great speakers your team has put together.

[Easley:] Chip Ingram, Gary Chapman, Tommy Nelson, Tony Evans, Josh McDowell; this truly is a remarkable group of folks who are coming to Founder's Week. And, if you are in the area or within a few hours drive, come and participate --

[Gauger:] Sure.

[Easley:] -- in part of the Founder's Week. You can go to the website. You can download the entire Founder's Week brochure online and come and see part or all of the conference. We'd welcome you to come and attend the beautiful Moody Memorial Church and you will see the Moody Symphonic Band, our students; it is a phenomenal week and we would love to have you here.

[Gauger:] Yeah, you really will love it, if you're able to come. But let's say you can't. There's no need to frown. You can still take part in Founder's Week over the Internet. Complete information including schedules and speaker line-up, all available at our website, www.proclaim.mbn.org, www.proclaim.mbn.org.

Tomorrow, Tommy Nelson our Speaker. See you then here on *PROCLAIM!*.