

7/7/15
Week 28 WFL
Mark Gungor #2
Book: *The Battle over the Rules*

James: Oh, my goodness! Thank you. We've got Mark Gungor back with us. That's funny. It's just funny. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have Mark Gungor. He's written a book, *Battle over the Rules*. And he's got what looks like a couple, because he talks to married couples a lot. He talks to people -- they don't have to be married -- but he didn't want them living together. He made that clear the other day. That's right because the Bible makes that clear and that's a rule. It's like really a command; there are some commands.

I pointed out to Mark that I'd written a book several years ago called *The Absolutes* because there are absolutes and it is freedom's hope; that God has given us some standards and we need to get back to them because the standards are not to beat us up or brutalize us but to actually protect us in the shelter and shadow of the shepherd's watchcare. It makes sense. That's what he's talking about, the rules. So we're going to discuss them with him.

He is the pastor of Celebration Church up in Wisconsin. And he pretty well pastors the whole state of Wisconsin and there's some good things happening there. So he's trying to teach them the rules. They've got leaders that are trying to get them back to the rules and that's good. Would you welcome Mark Gungor to *LIFE Today*? Mark, good to see you!

Mark: Good to see you.

James: The battle of the rules -- we talked about some things that we were going to discuss in this and I want to read them right here. There are the obvious rules, they're the debatable rules - - this is stuff like in your little rule book here -- and then there are the rules and the times when you need a third party when you're discussing a rule; somebody to help work it out. That would be when you'd call me; right?

Mark: Exactly! Personally.

James: And I would settle it.

Mark: Hopefully, at four a.m.

James: Change the number, Betty!

[Laughter]

Tell me about those rules.

Mark: The obvious rules, now we're talking about the rules in there. The first part of the book is just debating what we were debating yesterday, about what are the rules? What are the lines?

James: And it is not legalism to have absolutes and principles.

Mark: Not legalism, you don't want to crush people. My concern is, you talk about the pendulum swinging is that in certain areas now we've swung so far away that people are not sure about the absolutes, especially when it comes to the whole sexual situation.

It's stunning how many Christians today have no problem saying, "Me and my boyfriend, we really love Jesus. We're on the worship team and stuff like that. We have sex but we really serve the Lord. We live together." People will tell you anything today. Because I think we've been so afraid, because of the pendulum thing, people don't know about any absolutes at all now -- which is a problem. Think of the absurdity of it.

Let's change the rule, forget the sex thing. "Me and my boyfriend, we really love Jesus but we kill people."

[Laughter]

James: There was actually a movie on that.

Mark: Yeah. "But we bury them in the backyard deep enough so the neighbors can't smell them." So that's --.

Or "Me and my boyfriend really love Jesus but we steal from old people. It's really funny. We talk about it."

James: They're too old to miss it.

Mark: Or "Me and my boyfriend we love Jesus but we lie to people." Any other thing, we'd all be mortified and we'd pull back. But sex today, nothing anymore because we're so afraid of someone yelling at us and attacking us that we've relieved of any absolutes. So that's the first

part of the book. Just saying that you have to have some rules or love can't really thrive. There has to be some conditions or there is no thriving. Now the first condition, the obvious, these are the ones you're supposed to hear on your wedding day, "For better or for worse" -- because we know what's coming!

[Laughter]

But they're not listening to us. Right? They're in love! "I'm in love!" Praise God! It is going to be wonderful!" And we have pre-marriage counseling but it's kind of an exercise in futility. It is. Pre-marriage counseling is like trying to have a debate about mathematics with an alcoholic on a bar stool.

[Laughter]

They don't listen to nothing! But we warn them, "For better or for worse!" They're just grinning, oh, hah! For richer or for poorer, it doesn't matter how much money.

Some people, "We got divorced; we didn't have any money." What? What kind of craziness is that? You guys got married at 19, right?

We did the same thing. We were so poor we had to look up to see what the poor people lived like. We said, "Don't worry, baby! Some day we'll be poor. Praise God!"

[Laughter]

Who needs money? People say, "Pastor Mark, what happens if you run out of money?" It will be like our honeymoon!

[Laughter]

Seriously! So for richer or... sickness or in health; right? Sometimes people get sick.

My wife, my darling wife has been very sick, stage four breast cancer. The physicians say she is going to die but we're holding out for the great physician for a miracle. But either way we're ready. At some point, that is a prayer that doesn't get answered. Everybody dies. Nobody gets out of here -- well, not today! It's a cult! They're going to kill everybody. No! We're not going to kill you but nobody gets out of this alive. You know what I'm saying?

So there is "sickness and health." Do you know how many people get divorced because their husband gets sick or their wife gets sick? These basic rules -- as long as these are the rules.

Now it's amazing how people don't want to do those anymore. People want to write their own vows. If I marry you, no! You don't get to write your own vows. "You make me feel like a puppy in the backyard on a spring day." What is that? Right? "Better or for worse, richer or for poorer, 'til death do you part!" The good news, somebody dies.

[Laughter]

So those are the rules! And we've all understood this forever -- but not today! Not anymore. None of those things mean anything to anybody now. So that's why I'm saying. Hey, let's get back to some fundamental -- no wonder marriages aren't thriving. There are no rules anymore.

James: You know what you did? Look here. See I did this rule book a few years ago with this big old thick book. He's making it easier for you. It's little bitty!

Mark: I'm not as smart as you; is what it is!

James: No! You just condensed it.

Mark: Okay, we'll go with that!

[Laughter]

That's what it was. I just wanted -- I'm as smart as him, I just wanted to condense it. Yeah! I like the way you sell stuff! So anyway...

[Laughter]

So those are the obvious ones. Then there are the debatable ones. Where your wife will have certain rules on you and it might be totally different than mine. You've got to be home by a certain time.

James: I learned this. The wives --

Betty: Here we go!

[Laughter]

Then I get my turn!

James: They have very high expectations that we can never quite live up to. Like if they think you're going to be home at a certain time, try not to make it sound too --

Betty: No! If you say you're going to be home at a certain time is different than if I think you should home at a certain time.

Mark: Prophecy!

[Laughter]

Betty: I take you at your word.

James: See, you saw the depth of conviction. So what I have learned is try to make it look like it's not necessarily a certain time but it could be any time beyond what you probably think it would be because I don't want to miss the expectation.

Mark: That's why his book is a lot thicker than mine. Because what he just said, I just would have said, get home on time. But I don't even know what he said right now.

James: Debatable -- it's debatable!

Mark: And everybody has those. And you wrestle those through. Those don't come with the rule book. You have the vows at the beginning, and then you've got to live life and people say, "Well, I don't like those. Why should I have rules?" Because you've got to live with each other. The Bible says better to live on the corner of a roof than in a house with a contentious woman. That's why you need to work it out.

James: You don't want to disappoint their expectations.

Mark: Because if mom ain't happy, nobody is happy.

James: Happy wife, happy life.

Betty: We settled it.

[Laughter]

James: I've got a problem with her. Can I counsel?

Mark: You have a problem with her?

James: We have in the Dallas/Fort Worth area very sick teams: Cowboys, Mavericks, Stars, Rangers.

Mark: I'm from Green bay, brother. Green Bay Packers! Praise God! Hallelujah!

James: The boy caught the pass!

[Laughter]

Betty: Just don't get in that discussion!

James: Here's the deal. Debate the rules but here's the thing. She's trying to correct these terribly dysfunctional teams.

Mark: Your wife?

James: She is the greatest coach on the planet.

Betty: I am good.

Mark: I believe you are.

James: She knows exactly what they're supposed to do.

Mark: She had children; I know!

James: But when they don't do right, she takes it out on me. I tell her I'm not playing. I'm not in the game.

Betty: I have to admit I do that sometimes.

[Laughter]

James: It's pretty cute, though. It's pretty cute.

Mark: But you know the rules.

James: Another debatable?

Mark: Why does it need to be anything? We're going to have a TV in a bedroom or we're not going to have a TV in our bedroom.

James: Are we going to have it on and have a timer or we're not going to have it on with a timer.

Mark: Whatever. There's no place in the Bible that talks about this. What happens in your house, the rules will probably vary differently than mine. What kind of shows you watch, what kind of shows you don't watch, these are the things that normal people, you debate. As you said on yesterday's show, very loud discussions. They're not arguments. Like two cats in a -- [screeching] After you get your eyes scratched out you go, "Okay, that's that rule. I got that one! Okay, no TV at bedtime. Praise God I understand that."

[Laughter]

But here's the thing. There's people getting mad about that. There should never be any rules because we believe in "unconditional love." That's the problem I have with the phrase. Again, call God's love unmitigated, unfathomable, unending -- just don't say "unconditional" because I think it sends the wrong signal. Boundless -- yeah, yeah!

James: Endless, eternal.

Mark: So many words, I just don't like the "unconditional."

James: I got you. No preacher in America will ever use it again. I'll never use it again!

Mark: It says there are absolutes. I'm lying now! I didn't read the book. I read part of it right there.

[Laughter]

Two words I just read just now.

James: You have another one though you say you need to bring a third party. They're debatable.

Mark: Yeah, but again backing up a little bit. First of all you don't think, does it matter? The

"for better or for worse" doesn't apply. People say, "Well, why are you leaving your marriage?" "Because it is horrible!" Well, what do you think "for worse" meant when we said, "for better or for worse?" Now we understand there are some things we won't get into but I'm just saying, there are people for no reason other than just not happy and stuff. And then they get mad if their spouse tries to require anything from them at all.

James: And sometimes just being apart can get both hearts shaped up and they come back together. They don't seem to get it together while they're sitting there banging their heads against the wall or each other.

Mark: What I'm saying is I think that's healthy, that's okay. It's okay to have loud discussions.

James: Yeah and it's okay to have somebody being a mediator.

Mark: Well, the mediator comes when you cannot come to a conclusion. Usually at some point you come to, "Yeah, we'll do this." "Okay, I'll take out the garbage." Everybody has their routine, and everybody does it differently.

I know a lot of guys, they do all the cooking in the house. You don't want me doing the cooking at my house. We all are going to die. So everybody is different. Some people, the wife handles the finances because the other guy can't add or subtract. Whatever!

But then you get the debatables where couples start fighting over it and if you can't come to a reconciliation or conclusion you really need to get somebody else in and you need to take it to a third party because you need someone else to help resolve.

Now here's the problem though. It's usually whoever is really the badly behaving one or the one who really wants to push the limits, they don't want anybody else to hear about it. You know what I'm saying? "This is our business! Nobody should know our business."

[Laughter]

Right? And they just want to live on an island. But if you live on an island, you turn into cannibals and you're going to eat each other. So you need to get off the island and come visit somebody and work this thing through because...

So I had this couple come in. The husband is upset because the lady is traveling for their startup company. She says to him, "Well, we can just share a room with Bob on the road because it will save the company money. It will be queen beds but share the one bed together." Well, he had a problem with that.

[Laughter]

I think I would have a problem with that. So they come and to fight it out with me.

James: This is true?

Mark: Most of what I say is true. [Laughing] So they try to make their case and it's that third party that has to say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Wait a minute." Now the one who didn't want to bring it was the lady.

At some level these people who really push the limits, they don't want anybody -- because they know they can't sell it to anybody else. But that's when you need to go have somebody else step in.

I want to -- you're a devout Christian couple. "Well, I want to look at porn." You know how many couples right now listen to that? And the one, usually the guy, he's got the woman just beaten into fear and submission. "If you really love me and trust me there's nothing wrong with it. There's unconditional love." All these phrases -- they're brilliant at getting away with all this stuff but they don't want to talk to anybody else about it because why? Who is going to sell that to you? They come talk to you and me, that's not going anywhere.

The list goes on and on. When you start really having bad situations you really have got to force the issue and usually the one will force the other. It's unlikely that you'll get both of them to agree to go to a third party. At some point the one --

James: And that's sad.

Mark: It is sad but that's where the other one really needs to force the issue and you need to take a stand which people are very uncomfortable with. Again, as long as you have the idea, well, gee, if we love each other we shouldn't have to worry about these things. These are really big deals that will have a negative impact.

So all I'm trying to say is look, you've got to have, whatever word you want to use, conditions, rules, guidelines, absolutes, whatever, everybody has to have this or your relationship cannot survive. If you don't have rules with your children, you will raise hellions. If you don't have rules for your teenagers they'll destroy themselves. And if you think you can have a marital relationship where everybody just does what whatever they want, no one has to answer to anybody else, you are delusional and it is destructive. We need to get back to some basic foundational rules.

James: Appreciate what he's got to say? Mark Gungor? *Battle Over Rules*, we really need to battle for the absolutes -- for the principles of God. God gave us standards, not as prison cells, but as walls of protection -- literally. God never wanted to keep his people in the cage. When children are too small to have understanding of why boundaries matter, you can have a chain link fence, you can have a fence that they can't open because they don't understand the danger that's outside in the street.

Well, once they get understanding of the danger outside the boundaries -- and that really is key -- so that people understand we didn't just make a set of rules to make you miserable but we gave you boundaries to enhance the joy of your life and your relationships. And that's precisely what Mark is talking about.

Mark, I appreciate you.

If you'd like to have the book you can get it online or in the bookstores. You have a web site there if people want to get some of your teaching on marriage and they just want to laugh sometimes their way back to feeling good?

Mark: It's LaughYourWay.com.

James: Is that it? Seriously?

Mark: It's from Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage; that's a seminar we do.

James: It's LaughYourWay.com. That's really good. Say thanks to him again because I think he's a blessing.

You've always been a joy to our audience. They not only learn but they laugh while they're learning.

You know what I'm going to do is shift to pretty dramatic situation right now because we're going to look at some that is no laughing matter. But here's the thing I want you to understand. Because of God's love and the fact that we can share it, not just discuss it, debate it or defend it but we can demonstrate it, we can release the river of life and really show people what love looks like, I want you to look at a situation where love is the only solution. But that love flows through yielded vessels.

Jesus said, "Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." I want to show you some people who desperately need just clean water, and because of living water I think you'll want to share it. Watch!

On the mission field

Tammy: To think that this is her only option -- for water. As far as she knows this is her water for life. I can't even imagine swimming, bathing in this water. I would be so afraid that I'd get sick, let alone drinking this very water. This is not real water. This is not water for life.

Open captions: The only water we have is from that pond. You can see the water is brown. I feel sorry for my children. Other people can have so many things for their children but I cannot afford to feed them or give them clean water. I had five children, two baby girls and three boys. The twin girls were eight months old when they died three years ago. My son died a year ago when he was only one year old. I was working far away and I could not give them my milk. Now, I only have this baby boy and a four year old boy.

Tammy: Gosh, it would be amazing if one day we were walking together and I was carrying clean water for you in a bucket. That would be my hope and my prayer. One day! There is hope!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, how do you feel when you listen to Tammy and you listen to that precious mother?

Betty: That mother is grieving so much in the loss of three children already, two left. And she is so afraid she is going to lose her other children because she has no choice but to give them that filthy diseased water.

But you know there is hope. There is hope because we have found this situation and we know what to do about it -- and that's drill the water wells. We can give this precious mother hope for her other two children if we will join together and let's make the difference -- let's give them hope. Let's show them hope.

James: Right there in that same area we got to see, not exactly there but not far, we got to see our grandson and his beautiful wife of one year, they had their one year anniversary there, we got to see them rejoicing as a well hit water and the water came up. You could see the joy on all the faces of the people.

And Tammy said as she was walking with that filthy water and that bucket where she had thrown that water out, how much it would mean to her to be able to walk with a clean bucket of water. Well, we can be the answer to that hope that she expressed. We can be an answer to the anguish and prayer and concern and request of that mother. We can give them a well. Would you help us?

Now think about this. We found 500 places like that that we know this year in 12 different countries, because the missionaries have shown us the situation and the possibility. And in nearly every instance we know there's water accessible. The cost of the well, and it is an average, it varies on depth, but the average through the year for the 500 is \$4800. One reason it is that inexpensive is you, the viewers, over the years, you paid for drilling rigs that were as high as a half million dollars. But those rigs now are able to go in and get several of them working, the water in 500 areas, if we will give them the resource to do it, the \$4800 per well.

Could you give a well? If you can, I believe you will. Could you give part of a well, \$1200 and pray, three join me, Lord, and we'll have a well? -- Or \$2400 and pray one joins you. Most of the wells are given by people giving \$48. That \$48, when you break it out, will give ten people water the rest of their life; that's how it breaks out. So that gift just keeps giving. Whatever you can do, we're asking you to do it.

We have some gifts: a wonderful devotional book for every day of the year based on seasons, beautiful "Names of Jesus" pens and the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" -- it's beautiful! So would you please make the gift God puts on your heart? And let's drill those 500 wells one at a time, one gift at a time.

Go online, LifeToday.org. Would you do it? Just move there now. Or you can dial the number, take your bankcard, either way, use that bankcard like a check. Always use it like a check; that's how we use them. But make the best gift you can and give life, in the name of love. Would you do that please? Right now, LifeToday.org or dial the number.

If you ever get a busy, you be determined and you get through. Say, "I'm going to give a cup of water. I'm going to give a well. I'm going to help." Please do it and thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution! *Mission Water for Life* is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh, clean, disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift you'll receive the "Every Day a New Day" devotional broken out into the four seasons of the year. This daily devotional features scriptures, inspirational thoughts, a Bible reading plan, and a place for you to journal each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request "The Names of Jesus" pen set; one inscribed with the names of Jesus found in scripture and the other reflecting the gifts of the spirit.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well.

And request this beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel" by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: I hope and pray that if you can you'll give the \$1200 or \$2400 or \$4800 for the well. Ask for the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel." I love to bless you but most of you communicate with us, "Thank you for the gifts but we love the joy of giving." We'll send you the devotion, the "Names of Jesus" pens to say thank you. But what you're doing is absolutely wonderful and we thank you.

If you'd like to have Mark Gungor's book, *The Battle over the Rules* because there are boundaries and there are rules that are absolutely wonderful, and mean so much to us in our life and in our relationships. Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Mark Gungor.

Mark, you're a blessing! Thank you, buddy! Thank you and bless your wife, and that battle.

Father, we pray that you'll heal her miraculously; in Jesus' name.

Thank you so much for watching. And thank you for helping us share water, life, love and truth! Go to stream -- stream.org every day. Let's get understanding of the times so we can change the future.

Announcer: Be sure to visit stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment! Stream.org