

# FamilyLife Today® Radio Transcript

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## Leading Your Family in the Great Commission

Guest: Ann Dunagan  
From the series: The Mission Minded Family  
Air date: November 24, 2009

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**Bob:** Have you been called to missions to be a missionary? Ann Dunagan says, “If you’re a follower of Christ you’ve been called.”

**Ann:** You know maybe you’re just in Safeway, and you’re going down the aisle, and you just see someone, and God just puts like a little nudge in your heart. That person just needs to hear a little word – you know a little encouragement or a little word of witness – you know it’s in having a passion for the lost if you realize we are the kingdom of God with God’s light inside of us brushing up next to the kingdom of darkness all the time. Most people do not even care, and we need to care more.

**Bob:** This is *FamilyLife Today* for Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Our host is the President of FamilyLife Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. Wherever God takes you today – that’s your mission field.

Welcome to *FamilyLife Today* thanks for joining us. When you and I have talked over the years about the responsibilities parents have in raising their children you have come back over and over again to four key areas that you believe parents need to be investing in. One of them is helping a child understand his or her identity right?

**Dennis:** That’s spiritually, and sexually.

**Bob:** One of them is developing a child’s character so that it’s godly character.

**Dennis:** Knowing right from wrong, and being wise, and not a fool.

**Bob:** One is helping your kids know how to build relationships and sustain relationships.

**Dennis:** Know how to love another person, forgive another person, and also ask for forgiveness.

**Bob:** And then the fourth area is the one we’re focused on this week. That’s the area of helping your child understand his purpose or his mission.

**Dennis:** His mission, and it really ties into Psalm 127 where it talks about children are like arrows in the hands of a warrior. The arrow was not meant to stay cloistered in the quiver—in the comfort of the nice little nest. No, the arrow was meant to be aimed at a target by the archer – by the warrior, and to be let go on a mission. I think that’s the imagery that God was all about as he challenges us as parents to think about letting our children go on purpose, and for a purpose.

**Bob:** You think a lot of parents today are letting go, and the arrow doesn’t know where it’s headed?

**Dennis:** Oh, no question! I think a lot of parents haven’t stopped to consider where they’re supposed to aim the arrow. What’s the bulls eye? Well, if I was a parent just starting out I’d go to the New Testament specifically the Gospels, and I’d say, “Are there any two great commands in the Gospels that Jesus gave that could give me the bulls eye of what being a parent is all about?”

**Bob:** You’d just ask that question right out of nowhere right? Hey, I wonder if there are any two great commands in the Bible – in the Gospels?

**Dennis:** Well, there is a great command first of all to love God, and your neighbor. Actually there are two commands in there. But, then there’s the great commission, which is also a command, and it is a command to go to the world, and make disciples. Now neither the Great Commandment nor the Great Commission is optional. They’re both a part of how we’re to raise children today. If we miss those right there—if we miss that bulls eye as parents, or as individuals we’ve missed life—we’ve missed what God has designed for us, and I think for our children as well.

We have a guest with us who I can see she’s about to come out of her seat in agreement with what I’m saying here. Ann Dunagan joins us again on *FamilyLife Today*. Ann, you have seven children, you’ve been in ministry for a quarter century with your husband John, you agree with what I just said – don’t you?

**Ann:** Absolutely! We are here to love God and to love others!

**Dennis:** And to go to the world with the greatest news that has ever been proclaimed.

**Ann:** This world desperately needs Jesus Christ! You know a picture that I sometimes think of is: Sometimes we talk about how there’s a little empty spot, and when we ask Jesus to come into our heart and fill that empty spot, He makes us complete. It makes God very small in our life.

What I try to realize is that God is the awesome, almighty creator God of the entire universe, and He is huge. He just wants for us to surrender our lives to Him so that His presence can flow through us, and through our family to a lost and hurting world. He wants for His light to flow through our family to make a difference in this world. That’s what we’re here for!

**Bob:** You're written a book called: *The Mission Minded Family*. From the get go did you and John purpose to be intentional about raising kids who were mission focused?

**Ann:** Absolutely – as we started our family we realized that we wanted to raise our children to love God and to surrender their lives to Him. You know whether it was sitting on the couch reading them stories, or teaching them how to pray—teaching them to say Jesus—that we raised them to fulfill God's purpose. Not necessarily that they all would become what we typify as a missionary because we knew that God also gives unique callings to each one of our kids.

We're to train them up in the way they should go into the particular bent or particular gifts and talents that God has because there are needs in this world in every sphere of society for men and women of character who know God, who love Him, who can go into politics, who can go into government, who can go into the education system or into sports, and to preach the Gospel.

**Dennis:** You know as you were talking it reminded me of one of my favorite memories of our family, which was preparing our kids to go to school every day. We'd read a little devotional, which took less than five minutes: It was called *On This Day*. It was a 365 day short story devotional about great missionaries who were heroic men and women who had given their lives for Christ, some who had given their entire lives for Christ – okay. It was stories you never heard of, but heroic acts like Indiana Jones, which we talked about earlier – just spiritual heroes.

I remember that spawning conversations with our kids just around the value of hearing stories about those who have stepped out in faith, and been obedient to God. Is that what you did as you took your kids around the world? You've now been on how many missionary trips with your kids?

**Ann:** Oh, I don't know how many but I've been to 29 different nations but many nations back and forth, back and forth to the same ones.

**Bob:** So, you're overseas two, three, four times a year?

**Ann:** Both my husband and I, sometimes we're going together, and sometimes we tag team. We're a team together, but sometimes it's like pass the baton.

**Bob:** When you go together do you always take seven kids in tow with you?

**Ann:** No, like I mentioned before we have always lived in the United States so when our family was smaller we would always go together as a family. Then as our family got to be a little bigger, and the Lord began drawing us into countries and places in the world that were extremely dangerous - the Lord was drawing us particularly to war torn areas like into the Sudan, or into Rwanda just after the genocide. So, we would just take every trip and pray – you know who's supposed to go? Is it Dad, and one of the

teenagers – is it Mom and one of the girls – is it Mom and Dad – is it Mom and Dad and a baby – you know Mom and Dad and several little kids? We would just take each trip and have the time of our lives!

**Bob:** But your kids all have passports, they've all been out of the country, they've all been on the field somewhere – right?

**Ann:** Absolutely! A mission minded family has up-to-date passports for everybody in the family, knows how to use chopsticks, and is not a picky eater.

**Dennis:** So, what was your favorite trip? I'm going to force you to pick a favorite trip where you saw God do something really special. That has to be a trip where you took your kids where they either observed it or participated in it.

**Ann:** Oh, there was this one trip where I was with my daughter Christy, and we started an orphanage. It was where the need of the orphan children – there's 130 million orphans in the world, and there was a particular group of orphans on this remote island in Lake Victoria called Bussi Island, and God just dug in our hearts, and the two of us were trying to figure out what we could do.

We looked at the need around us, and we looked at what was in our hand, and we thought how many mattresses and sheets and blankets can we get for three thousand dollars? We began with that and then started to raise sponsors, and started an orphanage called Osanidde Village on Bussi Island, Lake Victoria. My daughter Christy and I just had such a fabulous time together.

**Dennis:** And these are orphans of aids?

**Ann:** Yes!

**Dennis:** How many of those children have aids themselves?

**Ann:** Only one. We're very thankful to the Lord that the rest of the children their test results have all come back negative.

**Dennis:** And today how many children are in that orphanage?

**Ann:** Today there is 160. We don't call them orphans we call them Osanidde kids. Osanidde is a Ugandan word that means you are worthy, and it sounds just like Oh Sunny Day. We wanted a happy place; we wanted a place where these kids would be raised up to not just be fed, and clothed and have a roof over their head but to be loved. They're in a home environment with a widow that is their permanent Mom – eight to ten kids, and then they have school, and a chapel, and these children are being raised to deeply, passionately love God. They have prayer every morning before the sun comes up for at least an hour and a half to two hours – I'm serious. These children pray fervently! They challenge my faith every time I go there and see these little kids.

**Dennis:** And you're working with Ugandan families to adopt them?

**Ann:** Absolutely.

That's in a second orphanage called Guma Na Yesu Children's Center where we're working to get those children adopted into homes. At Osanidde we felt in that particular situation that the children on that island needed to be protected and cared for in that place to be able to be raised up to influence those remote islands for Jesus Christ.

**Bob:** Okay, I just have to stop you here because most of the Mom's and Dad's who are listening to us right now don't travel out of the country three or four times a year – their kids don't have passports – they're thinking I do want to raise my kids to love Jesus, and to have godly character, and I would like them to have the mission orientation that you talked about Dennis, where they have a spiritual purpose for their life, and they're asking God what does a surrendered life to you look like, but we're not going to pack them up on the plane and go to Africa – that's not just a part of what we do. Do we have to do that to raise a mission minded family?

**Ann:** I think we have to be willing to do it – you know?

**Dennis:** Even if we don't have the money we have to be willing because I've seen God provide for some of these mission trips in some pretty cool ways.

**Bob:** So, to be a mission minded family you're saying sometime on the field short-term mission at a minimum that's a part of being mission minded?

**Ann:** Not necessarily! I think that God is looking for our heart, and I think God takes you where you're at. You know, wherever you're at right now God just wants to kind of move you to the next level. It might be just thinking about it a little more – maybe just buying a couple of missionary biography books, and beginning to read some stories to your kids.

**Dennis:** Yes and then maybe joining a group from your church that's going to a country that's nearby – you know. Or, going to an inner-city area that's near where you live to be able to minister. It really means taking steps of faith where you are because people are all over the spectrum.

**Ann:** Absolutely!

**Dennis:** They're taking baby steps, and some are taking big leaps, but God takes us where we are and I think as we go it's where we get God's heart for those who've never heard about Christ, where we see the needs of orphans like you did. I mean you went to Uganda how many times before you established an orphanage there?

**Ann:** Oh – ten years?

**Dennis:** So, dozens of times!

**Ann:** Dozens of times of seeing these little kids face to face until it finally was like I can't go on living unless I do something more.

**Dennis:** You have to do something about it. There was a passion within you that ultimately led to the establishment of that orphanage.

**Ann:** That's right – you know God wants to stir in us a deeper passion for the lost people. You know maybe you're just in Safeway, and you're just going down the aisle, and you just see someone, and God just puts like a little nudge in your heart – that person just needs to hear a little word—you know a little encouragement, or a little word of witness. You know it's of having a passion for the lost if you realize we are the kingdom of God with God's light inside of us brushing up next to the kingdom of darkness all the time and most people do not even care. We need to care more because eternity is too long, and hell is too real for us to just say, "It's not my thing."

**Bob:** So, I have a five year old or a ten year old or a fifteen year old at home - now I'm thinking okay I want these kids to have a heart for the world; to care about the lost do I read them the missionary biographies? Is that the best thing I can do, or what kind of tips would you give me as a parent to stir up in the heart of my kids a desire to see the Great Commission fulfilled?

**Ann:** I think reading stories is awesome – reading the news – being able to just expose our kids to current problems and challenges around the world where we can show them you know this is a current problem that's happening right now in India – we need to pray for this today.

Or, like the other day there was a missionary from China who came to our church, and he was a young adventurous guy and he would go hiking or bike riding into remote places of China, and he would give out these little remote radios that were hooked to a Christian radio station, and pass them out in unreached villages. I thought wow! So, after church I just brought my kids up after church to meet this guy—you know this is someone I admire—this is someone I want them to see—this is a man that's like a hero that's real that you can talk to, and you can look in the face.

**Dennis:** And invite them home. I remember when our kids were teenagers we would invite some of these leaders who came to our church or who visited here at FamilyLife from around the world to come to our home for a meal. First of all they need to see what an American family looks like that are attempting to follow Christ, but secondly American kids and American teenagers really need to see some of these heroes face to face, and then set them up for them to share their stories around the dinner table. Instead of the meal being over in an hour take two hours for the meal, and let them share about how God's working in their country.

**Ann:** You know Elisabeth Elliott mentioned that when she was a little girl growing up in her family they would often have missionaries that would come and stay in their home and her mother said that she feels sorry for those that don't invite the missionaries over because it was such an honor to hear their stories.

You know something that really influenced my husband when he was a little boy – he had this hero – this Sam from the Amazon that was traipsing through the jungles, and killing the crocodiles and eating the monkey brains, and doing these amazing things. Well, one day Sam from the Amazon came and stayed with his family on the farm. My husband said that before the missionary came his folks tried to figure out what they could do to give a gift to this man. They didn't have much money. They had a big family, and no discretionary income but they thought well, you know what can we do?

They ended up selling a cow, and they came up with about a hundred dollars. This was quite a while ago, and when the missionary came my husband watched his parents just hand that money just quietly – just kind of put in the hand of that missionary, and just say here – this is for you. But, my husband knew what a sacrifice, and how all month long his parents were trying to figure out how they could come up with something to give to the missionary. My husband as a little boy - he was 12 years old – he ran into his room, and he pulled out his little piggy bank, or whatever it was that he was keeping his money in, and he dumped it out on the bed and he pulled together all of his money – he had about 40 bucks – and he came out and he gave it to that missionary. He thought you know if missions is that important to Mom and Dad it better be important to me.

**Bob:** One of the things I hear you saying is that as parents we have to help our children have a world focus not just a United States focus. I think part of the problem is most of us don't have a world focus – just a United States focus. I mean I'll hear about fighting that's going on in some country, and I'm not even sure where it is on a map, and then I'm thinking and why would I even care that there's fighting going on in that country? We really need to look at our own hearts and say, "Do we have a heart for the world, or do we just have a heart for our own back yard – right?"

**Dennis:** Yes, and to that point I think every family ought to have a country that they're praying for. That would just be a great application out of this broadcast. I believe it was William Carey who was a cobbler who had a map of the world on his wall where he repaired shoes, and he prayed for the country of India not realizing at one point that God would tap him on the shoulder, and tell him to go.

**Ann:** You know when Hudson Taylor was little his dad had a fervent heart for China. His father he had health problems – he wasn't able to go himself but he instilled in his family a heart for China. Hudson Taylor was only five years old when he said, "When I'm a man I mean to be a missionary, and go to China."

I think also another thing that is a simple way to begin like a little baby step is get a globe, and have it out somewhere in a prominent place in your home—maybe put up a map—

maybe collect the missionary newsletters, and put them up on the wall – put some things on your refrigerator – put some missionary books on your coffee table just stick them there so that they're easily accessible for people who come into your home.

We kind of went a step further, and we took our family room, and we put wallpaper over one entire wall. One entire wall is an entire giant map of the entire world, and our office is all decorated like Africa - you know we have stuff from all over the world - it's because as people walk through our house we tell them stories, and it's awesome.

**Bob:** You know I'm going to follow up on your suggestion. We're going to start praying for either New Zealand or Fiji. I'm not sure which – maybe Hawaii but I'm thinking we're going to make that our focus – maybe God will call us there.

(laughter)

**Dennis:** I have a more noble—not that Fiji or New Zealand doesn't

**Bob:** That's not ignoble!

**Dennis:** It isn't but!

**Ann:** New Zealand needs Jesus!

**Bob:** That's right!

**Dennis:** Oh yes, and Australia too, but I was going to challenge folks to consider praying for a country in Europe. Right now Europe is becoming Muslim – I mean the fastest growing religion in all of Europe is Islam, and people are becoming Muslims - they're embracing that faith as their own, and I think we owe Europe our own faith. They helped give birth to America's spiritual roots – the Pilgrims, and the great pioneers who came and settled America - perhaps it's time for a new generation of families to begin praying for those countries that perhaps your family came from, and begin to pray for a spiritual awakening in those countries because they need to hear about Christ as well.

**Bob:** Well, and the point is we need to be on mission. Some of us are going to go, some of us are going to give, some of us are going to pray, but all of us need to be focused on what is the mission of the church – what God has called us as families to – what He's called us as individual believers to – what He's called His church to, and that is introducing people to God through Jesus Christ so that they can be reconciled to their creator, and can be adopted into His family, and then disciplining those who have come to faith. That's what the great commission in Matthew 28 is all about. That's what Ann's book is all about as well: It's called *The Mission Minded Family*.

Ann gives us very practical thoughts here on what we can do as mom's and dad's first of all to make sure that our own hearts are pointed in the right direction, and then that

we stir the hearts of our children to have a mission mind set – a mission orientation. We have copies of the book *The Mission Minded Family* in our FamilyLife Today resource center.

One great idea for families – a practical way that you can inspire your kids to be on mission is to read them the stories of missionary heroism. We have a book in our FamilyLife Today resource center that recounts a number of these stories: The book is called *The Adventure of Missionary Heroism*, and you can find more information about that book, and about Ann's book on our web site: [FamilyLifeToday.com](http://FamilyLifeToday.com) – that's [FamilyLifeToday.com](http://FamilyLifeToday.com)

You can order from us online if you'd like, or you can call toll-free 800-FLTODAY – 1-800-358-6329. That's 1-800 F as in "family" L as in "life" and then the word TODAY. When you get in touch with us we can get you more information about these books or make arrangements to have the ones you'd like sent to you.

Now I just need to say here – we do appreciate those of you who help support the mission of *FamilyLife Today*. Really at the core of what we're all about is seeing every home become a Godly home. That means first of all introducing mom's and dad's, and husbands and wives and children to Jesus Christ to help them understand what it means to have a relationship with Him, and then secondly pointing families to the scriptures so that we can understand what the Bible teaches us about how we're to live for Christ.

Those of you who help support the mission of this ministry we appreciate your partnership with us, and your mission mindedness. I want to take a minute here and just say thank you to you for being a part of what God's doing through the ministry of *FamilyLife Today*.

If you're able to help with a donation this month – a donation of any amount as a thank you gift we'd like to send you Barbara Rainey's new devotional guide for families called: *Growing Together in Gratitude*. It's a seven day devotional designed to help cultivate a heart of thanksgiving in our own lives, and in our children's lives. You can request that book when you make a donation this month of any amount to help support the ministry of *FamilyLife Today*.

If you make that donation online at [FamilyLifeToday.com](http://FamilyLifeToday.com) just type the word "GRATITUDE" in the key code box on the on-line donation form, and we'll know to send you Barbara's devotional or you can call 1-800-FLTODAY – 1-800-358-6329. Make a donation over the phone, and just ask for the gratitude devotional.

Again let me see thank you so much for standing with us, and for partnering in the ministry of *FamilyLife Today*. We hope you can join us back tomorrow Ann Dunagan is going to be here again. We're going to talk about how we can raise mission-minded children, and become a mission minded family.

I want to thank our engineer today Keith Lynch and 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*.

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