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Annie: Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store.

Okay, two quick things. First, before July we talked about the chance we had to go in together and support CAP, Christian Appalachian Project, and their backpack program where they pack food in backpacks to send home each weekend with kids who are food insecure all across Appalachia.

I told y'all I'd match what you donated up to \$2,000 and then you guys went and gave \$4,634. What? Y'all! So we decided to go ahead and round it up to a total of \$10,000. I'm so grateful to this amazing group of friends for making sure these incredible kids have the food they need to keep them learning and growing and having fun.

We made it fun reel about it over on Instagram, if you want to watch the moment, we got to round it up to 10,000. So be sure to check that out on my Instagram. That's Annie F. Downs there.

And secondly, my new devotional Chase the Fun has been out for almost a week now. It's been so fun to see y'all get yours in the mail, or see the posts that you're doing from Walmart and Target where you are finding them on the shelves.

We've never been in Walmart before, so I need to do me a favor. Here's what is true. I never know what to get there. But you guys are always showing me these cute clothes you found at Walmart, or these great deals you've discovered. So I need to see what else is in your cart next to Chase the Fun. So give me some shopping inspo.

So take a picture when you're at Walmart next with Chase the Fun and like your favorite thing that we all definitely need, and I can re-share that. So thank you for chasing the fun with us and that awesome. We're so thankful that our friends at Target and Walmart when they are walking by the bookshelf get to see Chase the Fun there. That's super cool.

So listen, if you haven't gotten yours yet, be sure to purchase one at Walmart or Target or wherever you love to buy books and pop to the show notes for the link to join a whole bunch of us who are going to go through Chase the Fun together starting next Monday, August 15th. The links to all of our partners are there as well.

Sponsor: Speaking of, before we dive into today's conversation, a quick word from one of our amazing partners, [BetterHelp](#). I think a lot about how to be a whole healthy Annie. Y'all know this. We talked about it here and with our guests a lot.

Taking care of ourselves physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally really matters. I mean, this is the only mind I've got so I want to be sure that I keep it as healthy as I can. There are plenty of ways to support a healthy brain like bathing in Scripture and learning a new language or taking power naps. And there's also BetterHelp Online Therapy.

I think we all encounter moments when we need someone to help us sort through our experiences and thoughts and emotions so that we can make the healthiest choice possible. I know my own counselor has been invaluable to me and learning to catch destructive thought patterns and to learn more helpful habits to replace them.

BetterHelp is online therapy where they match you with a therapist in under 48 hours. You can talk with your therapist via video, phone, or even live chat only therapy session. So you don't have to see anyone on camera if you don't want to and it's more affordable option than in-person therapy.

My friends get 10% off their first month at betterhelp.com/thatoundsfun. Again, that's betterhelp.com/thatoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show I get to talk... You guys, I can barely even deal. I get to talk with Coach Tony Dungy and his wife Miss Lauren. Listen, Coach Dungy is a New York Times bestselling author and a Super Bowl-winning, NFL Coach of the Indianapolis Colts.

His wife Lauren is an early childhood educational specialist, also a bestselling author and amazing speaker and the VP of the Tony Dungy Foundation.

They've been married 31 years, currently have 11 children, we will talk about why. Their new book *Uncommon Influence: Saying Yes to a Purposeful Life* is such an inspiring and powerful read. I really can't say enough about how fired up I am that I got to talk with them. Well, you hear it, you hear it in my voice. I know. You're going to absolutely love them.

So here's my conversation with Miss Lauren and Coach Tony Dungy.

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Annie: Lauren and Tony Dungy, thank you guys so much for joining me on That Sounds Fun. What an honor to have you here.

Lauren: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

Tony: Thank you, Annie.

Annie: Oh my gosh! Coach, I just kind of can't believe it. I feel like I've been watching you coach people that I love and teams that I love for decades. So this is incredibly fun for me. I'm a huge football fan. So this is fun. Listen, I need you to know I went to University of Georgia.

Tony: Okay. Well, we have some friends that went to Georgia. Aaron Murray actually played with our son Eric in high school and they want to stay together. So we have some Georgia connections. Coach Richt has been a great friend over the years through FCA. So yeah, we have some ties there.

Annie: And it's our first game of the season is Georgia versus Oregon.

Tony: Wow. We have some ties in Oregon too.

Annie: That's right. So it's gonna be us versus y'all. And listen, Coach Richt was on the show last year, Coach Dungy. So he came to Georgia when I was a sophomore. And I had never met him before until he was on the podcast last year, and I just cried. Like, "You were such a gospel inspiration on our campus." I think the world of him. He was just such a good coach and a good man to have on campus.

Tony: Well, those are the kinds of people you want leading the programs. Not only excellent coaches, but people who care about their students and care about their athletes, want to see them flourish as people and also want to share the gospel.

Annie: Tell me the difference because you were a coach in the NFL for a lot of years, NFL Hall of Fame. What's the coaching difference between college and NFL?

Tony: There's not a lot on the field different. It's really the same thing—trying to pull people together and inspire people. But the difference I've found in the NFL, especially for your faith, you're not governed by a state institution. You don't have to worry about some of the things that the college coaches and high school coaches have to worry about in terms of the law. You can feel very free to share the gospel, you can be free to be yourself.

Annie: Wow.

Tony: And that was a big advantage for me.

Annie: Right. Okay, Miss Lauren, this new book *Uncommon Influence*, back me up a little bit. When did y'all start writing books?

Lauren: We started writing books together about 10 years ago. And we've written 10 children's books, and then this is our third book for adults that we've written. So we've enjoyed the process.

Annie: How did you decide to start writing books? Back me up where were y'all like, My husband is a football coach, I'm raising a bazillion children that we're going to talk about, but also we need to start writing these books and having these resources for kids and adults. So many of our friends listening want to write a book,. Tell me about when that transition happened in your heart of like, "We need to do this."?

Lauren: Well, you know, as you can imagine, there are so many stories that come out of our life experiences: coaching, coach's wife, being in the public eye, trying to parent, raise children. A lot happens and everyone wants to know how, why. How is that possible? And how did you make it happen? And how do you serve the Lord and honor Him in the midst of all that?

So we told our story over and over, and then we decided, Let's write a book, and then let's let... You know, people that are maybe struggling in their marriages or just need advice and needs encouragement how to navigate through life with jobs, them in jobs, raising a family, married, maybe different paths in your married life.

And we decided that, Let's give it a shot. Let's tell her story. And the response was so well we did *Uncommon Marriage*. And that was basically telling our story of how we journey through the coaching track and raising children, adopting children along the way.

A lot of people were encouraged by that, they had questions, so we wrote another book. And we kind of gave a lot of good scripture and advice and some of the things that we did that didn't work out well that we wanted to pass on to other people. So it's been encouraging. It's been a blessing for us as well.

Tony: I'll tell you another thing, Annie, that really spurred this whole writing thing. You talked about the difference in college coaching, NFL coaching. Well, Lauren, ran the women's group with the Buccaneers. And one of the projects that they did, the wives and the girlfriends, was reading two elementary school students—talking about education and reading.

Well, she came back one day and said, "You know what? We're just really having a problem finding books to read to these young kids, something that's fun and interesting that will keep their attention but has a good message. There's just not a lot out there for kids. There's not a lot of diversity in some of the children's books." So someone suggested to us, "Well, if you think that's a problem, why don't you kind of write it?"

Annie: Why don't you fix it?

Tony: So we wrote a children's book called *You Can Be A Friend*, and it went to number one on the New York Times list and the rest kinda is history. As Lauren said, there are nine other children's books that follow that.

Annie: Lauren, will you tell the story that is an *Uncommon Influence* about handing out children's books to low-income schools? Will you tell that story?

Lauren: Yeah, absolutely. We decided that was important for children to have that knowledge, to have the education if they're going to do anything in life. So we wanted to reach out and minister to the kids. And we did that by going to schools and reading to children.

And we found out that many of the kids never had a book of their own, to call their own to take home. So after we read a story that was encouraging and spoke to them, we gave them their books and they were just so excited. It was like Christmas in the classroom when they received their own copy.

And I think they were amazed when they flip the book over and they saw our picture on the back. They looked at us, they looked at the book, and they said, "Wait, did you guys write the book? Are you married?" I mean, they just had so many questions because it had never been modeled for them to see people coming into the classroom that were married to each other, that liked each other, in fact, were parents, had children.

So that was eye-opening for us to let us know that a lot of work to do—we were going to make an impact and a difference in the classroom. And it could start writing in Tampa, which is where we live. Yeah, we've decided to do that.

So we've been doing it for a number of years. And it's been a great program. The kids are inspired to read. Sometimes we give them incentives, like if you read so many books, there's a prize, there's a reward. And then don't keep that book to yourself, pass it down to a sibling, or a relative.

So it's oftentimes Tony and I will be shopping in the community, and we'll see little kids that run up to us, "You came to our school. You read to us. I love that book. My brother read it." So it's really encouraging.

Tony: It's nice to go in and say, "Hey, you know, just like we read to you, you can read to someone else. You can read to your siblings or your neighbors." And then, Annie, we take things for granted so much but we've been in schools where teachers have told us, "Oh, thank you for that, this. You know, so and so is my student, they've never had a book at home to read." And you just can't even imagine that happening, but it does.

Annie: Yes. I mean, y'all do such a beautiful job in *Uncommon Influence* of talking about the needs that the kids right next door to us have. We're so thoughtful about the kids globally, and I think that's really good. I mean, I partner with Compassion International, we talk about them in my tour events, and I love them. But also I'm like, Man down the street from me at the elementary school there are kids who I could be reading to.

Lauren: Yeah, right. In our own community, we have children. And we partner with what we call Title 1 schools. And those are children who receive free or reduced lunches. And that puts them in the category of the Title 1 schools. There's a need to have people come in and encourage them, inspire them so they can think beyond their neighborhood.

And they are so encouraged and so blessed. We tell them to dream. Like, "What would you like to do when you grow up?" And well, most of them say, "Football player."

Annie: I'm sure. They're like, "Coach, help me out."

Lauren: Not everyone's gonna be a football player. What about a teacher or a pilot? You know, we begin that process, but it starts in the classroom. You've got to get that foundation. If you don't have a good education, you won't succeed in life.

But if you get that background and get that love for education and learning, then you can do anything. I mean, it's endless, the possibilities. And their eyes light up and they get excited and have a lot of questions, and they start dreaming.

And what's rewarding is we get letters back from the children, and they'll tell us, "I am going to be a dancer or I'm going to be a teacher because you told me to dream and think. What is my passion? What do I like to do? What am I good at? And what

would I like to kind of investigate?" And that's gets the ball rolling. And they're so excited and encouraged.

Annie: So I'm not married yet, I don't have kids yet, and as I was reading your book last night, I was thinking, I was like, "I need to foster. I need to adopt. Okay, how do I do this? I need to..." And then I loved when I got to the part of the chapter where you said, "If you can't start with bringing kids into your home, there are small ways to start."

We know that about half our audience isn't married yet and half of our audience is and married has kids. And so for a lot of these families, they're like, "Yeah, I do want to help kids, but maybe fostering isn't the next step and adoption isn't the next step." What are some ways that we can like start having uncommon influence in the kids' lives around us?

Tony: Well, one way is just Big Brothers Big Sisters. That's another program that we supported. "Hey, I'm not married or I can't take on a full time child. But you know what? I can spare 10 hours a week. I can do a couple of hours after school or a couple of hours on Saturday to mentor someone." Everybody needs that.

Going to the Boys and Girls Club. Derrick Brooks was one of our great players with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. His whole career, he's got a charter high school now. He's done a million things with kids. But it started by going to the Ponce de Leon Boys and Girls Club, you know, a tough neighborhood in Tampa and just said, "I want to connect for an hour with these kids."

Lauren: And there are opportunities, reading in the classroom, tutoring children after school. With fostering and adoption, not everyone is called to do that, but you can walk alongside the foster parent. "I'm gonna give you a night off. I'm gonna come in and watch your children so that you and your husband can have a date night."

We also have many families that will make a meal. "Here's our home cooked meal for you. You have a night off from the kitchen and dinners brought in and you can enjoy it and then do something with your children." So there are many ways to partner with fostering and not have to take the kids 24/7.

Annie: Y'all should have seen me on my porch last night. I was like, "Okay, calm down, Annie. Here's some things you can do. You don't need to like get on Amazon and look for bunk beds quite yet, Annie. Well, we start with finding some foster families in our community, and seeing if you can bring them dinner."

Lauren: Yes, that's a great way to start. It'd be much appreciated.

Annie: The subtitle of the book is Saying Yes to a Purposeful Life, but the whole book is about serving other people. Are y'all a little bit... not tricking us. But I'm wondering if it's a purposeful life require that we serve other people?

Tony: I think so. We go back to Matthew when Jesus was having a discussion with his disciples, and "I want to sit on your left hand. I want to sit on your right hand. Which of us is gonna be the greatest? Who's going to be the sergeant? Who's going to be the lieutenant? Who's going to be the general in this army, Lord?"

And He said, "Well, in my kingdom it's different. In my kingdom the one who serves is going to be lifted up." And that always kind of stuck with us. Okay, yeah, we've gotten these fantastic opportunities. And yes, I'm the head coach of the Bucs, the head coach of the Colts, so everybody's kind of looking at me and saying, "Oh, wow." But God says that in His kingdom it's not those people will be rewarded. It's the people who are on the ground floor helping others.

Annie: I often joke that I feel like I'm gonna be the one that when we get to heaven the Lord's like, "She's gonna be cutting the grass. She's got some more to do. The Dungys will take a seat, Annie will go cut the grass."

When we think about serving other people, one of my favorite quotes from the book, I think it's in one... For our friends listening, the book comes out tomorrow. And y'all rotate writing chapters, which I thought was so fun. But I think this is in one of your chapters, Coach, where you said, "We're motivated by compassion not categorization."

Tony: Yeah. And I think that's what you really have to look at. What do I see when it's out there? Lauren's kind of taught me that it's very easy to look at someone and say, "Oh, they shouldn't do this?" or "Why are they doing that?" or "That's the problem," as opposed to saying, "Well, why do you think they're in that situation? What's going on? How can you help them?"

And so having that compassion of wanting to help makes all the difference in the world. I've learned a lot from Lauren and her group. They do so much in the schools. And I think that that is a reason why going out there reading and then saying, "You know, there's other ways we get help. There's other ways we could get involved."

We were actually reading at a school and I've never forgotten it. This principal was telling us that they had to do a sweep of the school on Fridays because the kids eat their meals there, but they don't want to leave on Friday because they're not able to

eat at home. So they'll hide in the school thinking if we stay at school we'll get meals tomorrow. And she was telling us this story, and I just thought, "Man, how can you help? What can we do to help that situation?"

Annie: Yes, Miss Lauren, I was thinking about that when you write in the book about how in 2020 you thought to start hel... thinking about the kids who weren't eating at home. And I thought... genuinely I was embarrassed that I was like, "I don't know that I thought one time what I could do. I think at moments I thought in 2020 like, "Oh, I wonder if kids are all right." But I didn't do anything.

So teach me how next time I move from just the thought of there may be someone in need without categorizing them and assuming. Because that's what I think I do wrong sometimes too is I assume who needs my help versus actually walking with Jesus's compassion toward who needs my help. How do we move from a thought to actually do anything? Because you are a motivated woman. You like do things.

Lauren: Well, I'd start with prayer for me. Praying and asking God for wisdom. What can I do, Lord? How can I serve? How can I be your servant? How can I be obedient to what you've called me to do?

And during the pandemic, I prayed about so many opportunities. "What can I do? Where can I serve?" And the Lord just brought to my attention that there are children who are not going to school that are used to having breakfast and lunch at the schools that are now at home, maybe not necessarily with their parents and they have no direction, they have no love and guidance.

And so a friend of mine, we got together and we decided that we're going to make a difference. We're going to go to the school. We can't go inside but we can certainly serve in the parking lot. So we begin passing out breakfast and lunch to the kids. And they would come on their bikes, they walked.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: Sometimes their parents would come with them or they would drive in the car. But these kids clearly were looking for love and attention. We had to do it at distance because of COVID. We had to honor the rules for that. But it was amazing how many children were just looking for acknowledgement.

"Hi, how are you doing? How is your morning going?" And we serve them their meals. And they would linger around in the parking lot because they wanted to talk to us and they wanted to hear some encouragement. But that was beautiful. We did that during the entire pandemic.

And there were many schools' sites that had the breakfasts and lunches, but very few volunteers. So once we kind of roll back our sleeves, and that again, we found many things to do. And then we decided, well, these kids, they're being fed, but what are they doing during the day? So we put together activity packets. So art supplies and books. So they took those home and they were able to read and draw and color, and then bring them back the next day and "Look what I did. Here's how I spent my afternoon." They were so excited.

So yeah, it was exhausting, we were tired but we were blessed by the children and their enthusiasm. So we're in this together. We're gonna get through this. But the Lord showed us how to do it because we weren't quite sure. You know, how do you minister to children and honor everything that's going on in here and keep a safe distance? But it was with the prayer and asking God to show us just how to navigate this.

Tony: Now the part she left out, Annie, is mobilizing the whole community. Because I'm sitting there thinking, "Where are they getting all this food from?"

Annie: Right.

Tony: They would go to places and say, "Hey, we've got these needs, you need to help." So they're going to chain restaurants to say, "You got to get involved." And all of a sudden they've got Applebee's or they've got some other group behind them saying, "Okay, we'll donate the food.?"

But where are you getting these books from? And where are you getting the material from? "Well, we went to this store and we told them, 'You need to get involved.' But it's just, you know, you can't do everything, but you can do something.

Lauren: You can do something. Right. Annie, again, a lot of the restaurants weren't interested in serving but they were willing to put together packages of food and drink, some things for the children, the parents, the volunteers. So it really was rewarding.

Tony: So then they would go to people and say, "Hey, we've got all this. We've got books, we've got food, but we don't have anybody to serve. We need you." And they just end up getting this army of people who all helped out. But everybody felt good because "Okay, I can't serve but I have access to meal. I can't do this, but I have access to books. And you use everybody's gifts. I think that's what the Bible talks about.

Lauren: Again, that's being the hands and feet of Christ when you're doing that.

Annie: Miss Lauren, you better be careful. I'm about to move to Tampa and just follow you around and be your right-hand man helping you get all this done. That is just amazing.

[00:23:44] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing new partners, [MVMT](#). Okay, generally speaking, around our office we're prone to being rule followers but when people like the founders of MVMT decide to break all the rules to create a new kind of watch, one that comes in clean, original designs, fun unexpected colors and at fair prices, okay come on.

MVMT quickly grew into one of the world's fastest-growing watch brands and they shipped over 160 countries across the globe. Y'all, my MVMT watch is called The Avenue and of course I got it in Lexington rose. You know I did. And I love it so much. It's classy and clean.

And you may not know this about me but I have like the tiniest, little wrist. It's very true. I do not know how my hands stay on. My wrists are so tiny. And it's just the right amount of dainty to not like overpower my whole arm which I have to be thoughtful about.

MVMT Watches have the look and quality of a \$400 or \$500 watch that you're paying for at a department store but costs a fraction of the price because they were built online and own their process from start to finish. You get a beautiful watch shipped right to your door for free. And if you don't love it, you ship it right back for free.

Now MVMT has expanded into blue light glasses that protects your eyes from your screens. If you're like me and spend a ton of time in front of a computer screen, do yourself a favor and grab some of their ever-scroll blue light filtering glasses. They are a game changer. They really help with eyestrain and poor sleeping patterns. And the modern styles are so cute, y'all.

MVMT has minimalist jewelry and more styles and jewels that don't break the bank too. And all their stuff is designed out of their California headquarters.

If you want to elevate your look with style that doesn't break the bank, then join the MVMT and get 15% off today with free shipping and free returns by going to mvmt.com/thatsoundsfun. Again, that's mvmt.com/thatsoundsfun.

Sponsor: And one more amazing partner to tell you about, stamps.com. Getting back from my summer break and launching a book has had us very busy at work for the last couple of weeks, and honestly had me wishing I could be in multiple places at once several times.

I literally said out loud to someone last night, "I wish I just had five more hours a day." If I just had five more hours a day, I could do everything I want to. I can tell you what we for sure don't have time for: going to the post office.

Y'all, having to drop what you're doing to make a run to the post office is a major pain, especially when you've got more important things to do. So stop mailing and shipping the hard way. Use stamps.com instead. It's your 24/7 post office that you can access from anywhere.

For more than 20 years, stamps.com has been indispensable for over a million businesses, saving you time, money, and stress. Stamps.com gives you access to all the post office and UPS shipping services you need right from your computer. No special supplies or equipment needed.

And get discounts you cannot find anywhere else. We love saving money almost as much as we love quizzes. So it's like up to 30% off of USPS rates and 86% of UPS while also integrating seamlessly with Shopify, Amazon, Etsy, you name it. You'll be up and running in minutes, printing official postage for any letter, any package anywhere you want to send it.

You can get other shipping supplies from stamps.com too, including free priority mail envelopes and boxes. Don't mail and ship the hard way. Sign up with stamps.com today. Sign up with the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN for a special offer that includes a four-week trial plus free postage, and a digital scale. Let's go. No long-term commitments or contracts. Just go to stamps.com, click the microphone at the top of the page and enter the code THATSOUNDSFUN.

And now back to our conversation with the Dungys.

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Annie: Okay, let's talk about prayer for just a minute because y'all talk a lot about prayer in the book. We actually in April did a whole series. The whole month was about

prayer because it's just something our people love to talk about. I love in the book how you said, "Prayer is easy and prayer is hard."

Lauren: Sometimes, you know, you go before the Lord and you've got so much on your plate and you're just consumed with everything. But it's conversations, simple conversations with someone who you love and someone who loves you, and has a plan and a purpose for you. And going before Him and asking Him, "Lord, what would you have me to do? How can I serve? How can I be obedient to my calling?"

It doesn't have to be sophisticated. It's just simple conversation. I learned at a very early age that you can go to God for anything in. You know, we often think that we have to have it together when we go before the Lord, but He wants our intention, and He wants us to acknowledge Him as our provider, our helper, our deliverer. And He will meet all of our needs if we will just sit still before Him.

And I know oftentimes we're so busy, we don't even give the thought, and the days have over and we haven't even talked to God. And it's kind of like, "Well, no wonder my day has been kind of chaotic and kind of confusing." But if you start the day off with prayer, and it can be as simple five, ten minutes, just praying to God, reflecting on what He would have to do, your day will be a lot smoother.

Tony: We were just talking about it this morning that we had gone through a little period here where we hadn't prayed as much. We're in Eugene, Oregon, and the world track and field championships are going on. So we've been going out every day watching these unbelievable athletes.

Our kids are in different camps. They're getting up in the morning now. So we're starting earlier, staying up a little later. And we just said, "You know what? We've kind of missed that time." And it is easy to do. We talked about it being hard. Well, I think Satan is always, "Well, you need to do this. You can do that. You better get this taken care of." And pretty soon you lose focus on the most important thing.

Annie: In your time of prayer, how much of it is talking and how much is listening?

Lauren: And I think it's probably 50/50 for us. So praying, talking to God kind of go hand in hand. So that reflection time, breathing, meditating on scripture, just sitting still before the Lord, and then praying and asking Him for direction and telling Him my hurts, my disappointments, my challenges, thanking Him for the blessings.

"A lot of good things that happened, Lord, and I thank you for making it possible. I thank you for ordering my steps, making my day go so smoothly."

Tony: Yeah, I think that's really important. And I know for me personally, the best way I hear from the Lord is through the written Word, through the Bible. So I know I'm at my best when I pray and I'm reading. I know Lauren has a real good reading routine. I do probably 80% of the time. But I know when I'm not reading, I'm not really hearing from the Lord and listening as well as I should.

Lauren: Also for me, it's helpful I do a little journaling. After I read, then I write down some thoughts. "What did God say to them in this passage of Scripture? You know, what jumped out to me?" And then write that down. And that just helps me, it reminds me.

Because, as you said, we have busy days. Most people have schedules that, you know, from the moment they get out of bed until they retire at the end of the day, they're busy, they're on the go. So I have a journal. I reflect on that sometimes throughout the day, but certainly every day I'm looking at it and reading. And that helps.

And then I'll take it a step further. We have accountability partners. We have people in our group that we share our thoughts. So that helps encourage one another. This is what I'm reading. This is what God said to me in mine. And then my partners will put down their verses and share what the Lord has said to them. And that's been really helpful. That just kind of give some structure to my prayer life.

Annie: I think for our friends listening, they may not know this part, but I want them to hear this. On top of knowing how y'all prioritize prayer and reading scripture, how many kids are living in your house right now?

Lauren: We have eight children from ages 21 to 6. And then we have three foster children, they are 10, and then two 2-year-olds. They're not twins. So we have a lot of boys.

Annie: Y'all have two 2-year-olds right now?

Lauren: Two 2-year-olds.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lauren: So it's pretty crazy, but we love it. And again, God made that possible. Because if you would have asked me, would you put... The three came on the same day. We got a call, "We've got two boys, would you take them?" "Absolutely."

The five minutes later, another agency called and said, "We've got a little toddler who needs to go home. He was removed from a situation that was just not safe and

healthy for him." And I said, "Well, we have two that are on their way. They're enroute to our house. Let's do it."

And literally, we opened the front door, all three were in the driveway. We welcomed them in. God made it possible because in my own strength, it would not have happened. But again, He ordered steps and He gave me just that foundation of how to... And the kids... they just need love and security. They're not looking for a lot of entertainment and excitement. They just want someone to hear them, acknowledge them, and make them feel safe and secure. And we've been able to do that.

Annie: Do you know how many children-

Tony: We-

Annie: Oh, sorry, go ahead Coach.

Tony: I was gonna say we do get a little help because the 21-year-old and the teenagers now they're at the point where they can help. They're not all just being needy.

Annie: I mean, I'm wondering if you've counted how many children have come through your home over the years.

Lauren: Approximately 75 children have come.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lauren: Some have stayed for just a few days and some have stayed for a few years. But the goal was always reunification. So we're sorry to see them leave but happy if they're reunited with their families, and they're able to live with their biological parents. But sometimes it's not possible, they're adopted.

We did adopt one of the children that we had in foster care. He was with us at delight. And I laughed because his name is Jewelle and all kids are J. Our little kids are J. So when I heard his name was Jewelle with a J, I thought, "Mm, that's a problem." He ended up being available for adoption and we just jumped at the opportunity to adopt him.

Annie: So coach when you have these kids coming through your home, the ones that stay for days or for years, how do you instill in them a love for scripture? How do you introduce them to Scripture? So many of our friends listening are raising kids who they want their kids to love the Bible. Y'all talk about the Bible... When I read this

book and when I listened to you, it sounds like the Bible is like just an actual part of your everyday life.

Tony: And that's what you try to do. I think both of us had that growing up. My mother was a Sunday school teacher. And so she used to practice on Thursday nights.

Annie: oh, wow.

Tony: I was just so familiar with all those stories. And then she'd always... it was just kind of natural, you know, God says, Seek ye first the kingdom of God. You just grew up kind of hearing that, and you didn't even know it was necessarily from the Bible. It was just, "This is what mom said."

So that's what we try to do. You know, we try to show them, yes. And it's great when they can go and go to Sunday school and see it in the Bible. It's great when they can pick it up. But when they hear it from us, they see it from us, then it's gonna stick and resonate.

Lauren: And that same behavior is modeled for our children, but we include them. We involve prayer, obviously, when we're praying before our meals, but also at the end of the day, the children sit around the corner and we go around, and we pray, and they'll share their disappointments or they'll share something that went on, and thank God for what happened.

But that's a routine that we try to do every night. So the children know that's what you do. At the end of the day before you go to bed before you, you know, turn the lights out, we pray together as a family. And that allows us to hear their hearts as well. Because sometimes things have happened and they don't mention it to us, they don't share something, but it comes out in their prayer life. And then it's also reminder that we thank God. All of these blessings come from Him. And we want to acknowledge our Heavenly Father.

Annie: When you tell the story of Jordan in the book and adopting him, at one point you're talking about him and you say, We've been praying every day, of course, but there's prayer and then there's *prayer*. And it's in italics. So will you talk about when you're praying for your kids, what's the difference between prayer and *prayer* in italics?

Tony: Well, there are some things that just you can be casual about. "Oh, Lord, take care of this." And we'd appreciate it. And then there's some things that "Lord we'd need you to take care of this."

Jordan was born with a genetic condition that he's gonna have his whole life. He doesn't feel pain. And that leads to a lot of problems. So he's had a lot of surgeries, he's had a lot of complications, he's been some near-death experiences. So for him, when we pray for him, it's in italic. It says, "Lord, we need this taken care of. Watch over him." It's been great.

I think Lauren shared in the book that the pediatrician when he was first diagnosed said, "This might be a problem. He's not going to probably make it past six or seven years old. There's just not a lot of history with these kids living that long." And Lauren immediately said, "Oh, no, we're going to pray through that." He's 21 now and blossoming and doing great. So that was one of those italicized *prayers* that God answered.

Lauren: One of the exciting things about prayer is that it doesn't stay within our household. We involve our friends, our community. So we have a lot of people praying for us, standing in the gap with us when we're dealing with situations that require prayer, and we require wisdom.

So I love the fact that we're very open and very transparent. And God wants us to. And He also wants us to pray for other people. So it's not just our family or just our needs, but we're praying for the community, our church, our friends that are struggling with things. And that's what prayer is all about.

Annie: And the perseverance of it. I was so interested, Coach, that y'all put a chapter about perseverance in a book about serving. One of my tattoos is "persevere" because I kind of need that reminder actually on my body. But talk about the importance of not quitting when it comes to prayer and when it comes to serving and when it comes to loving. Like why do we need to be people who persevere?

Tony: You know, there are going to be challenges. Jesus said it's a narrow road, it's bumpy, it's twisty, it's not going to be smooth, it's not going to be easy. But if you stay with it and you stay on the road, eventually you're gonna get to that promised land. But many of us will, "Oh, this is too hard," and they'll give up just before you get there. And I think that perseverance is important.

We won the Super Bowl in 2006. The game we want to get to the Super Bowl, many Indianapolis Colts fans will tell me that was our favorite game. We beat the New England Patriots. At the very end, we get to the Super Bowl, everybody's celebrating and people's, "Oh, I'd remember where I was. That was my favorite game." And I'll often remind them, you know, we were only hit for one minute in that whole game.

Annie: Wow.

Tony: We were behind for 59 minutes in the game, but you say that was your favorite game? "Well, yeah, the way it ended up and we're the Super Bowl in the celebration. It was awesome." Well, that's the lesson. You can be behind or 59 minutes. If you don't give up, you can still have a great end.

Annie: Yes. Oh, man, I think we all need to remember that because we just don't know how this thing ends, right? Like we don't know the ending till we're there. And so we just persevere and persevere. I tell people a lot like, especially not being married yet, but desiring that, I'm like, "Hey, listen, I want to go to the end praying. I want to hope until the very end because I don't know how this story ends," you know?

Lauren: And that perseverance also involves trust too. Just trust and believe in God, believe in what He has for you. And as you said, you don't know the ending, but you're going to trust God who does know. And His ways are higher than our ways. So we have to believe Him for that. He wants the best for us, and He has the best plan for us. So we're just going to trust Him along the way.

[00:41:10] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friend! Just interrupting one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [ZocDoc](#). Okay, let's be real. Before we buy tickets for movies or make reservations for a new brunch spot, we're checking out the reviews, right? Of course we are. We're not savages. So why not do the same when you're booking a doctor's appointment?

With ZocDoc you can see real verified patient reviews to help find the right doctor in your network and in your neighborhood. After all, finding the right doctor is just as, if not more, important than finding the right plate of Eggs Benedict.

ZocDoc is a free app that shows you doctors who are patient-reviewed, take your insurance and are available when you need them. On ZocDoc you can find every specialist under the sun. Whether you're trying to straighten your teeth or fix an achy back, you get that mole checked out or anything else, ZocDoc has you covered.

ZocDoc's mobile app is as easy as ordering a ride to a restaurant or getting delivered to your house. Search, find, and book doctors with just a few taps, find a reviewed local doctors, read verified patient reviews from real people who made real appointments.

Now when you walk into that doctor's office, you're all set to see someone in your network who get you. So go to zocdoc.com and find the doctor that is right for you and book an appointment in person or remotely that works for your schedule.

Every month millions of people use ZocDoc, including your girl AFD. It is my go to whenever I need to find and book a quality doctor. Literally just spent a little time on there looking for a doctor with some headache stuff. And I really enjoyed it. It was fascinating and so easy to use.

So go to zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun, and download the ZocDoc app for free, that's literally exactly what I did, and then start your search for a top-rated doctor today. Many are available within 24 hours. That's zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun.
Zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun.

Sponsor: And I've got one last incredible partner to share with you, [Thrive Causemetics](#). Okay. I wouldn't necessarily call myself a girly girl but you know I enjoy all the makeup, skincare, and nail products. When they're better for my skin and the community, I call that win-win.

Thrive Causemetics features high performance beauty and skincare products made with clean skin-loving ingredients. No parabens, sulfates or phthalates, certified 100% vegan and cruelty-free. "Cause" is in the name for a reason, you guys.

Every purchase supports organizations that help communities thrive. And when things that I'm going to be spending money on anyway like lipstick, eyeshadow, mascara also help do good in the world, I think that's extra fun. Thrive has this liquid balm Lip Treatment. Y'all, it gives your lips such a smooth, glossy look and it replenishes moisture with a protective veil of skin nourishing vitamins and juicy hydration.

And don't even get me started on that liquid lash extension mascara. Y'all it's like magic how long it makes my eyelashes look with no clumps or flaking. And then when I do go to remove it at the end of the day, it feels like it's magic. It's warm water on a washcloth and it makes it slide right off. Seriously I'm in awe of how well it works while also being affordable and healthier for my lashes than all the damaging glue with falsies.

Now it's a great time for you guys to try Thrive Causemetics for yourself. Right now you can get 15% off your first order, please include that mascara, when you visit thrivecausemetics.com/tsf. That's thrivecausemetics.com/tsf for 15% off your first order.

And now back to finish up our conversation with the Dungys.

[00:44:46] <music>

Annie: We had some friends write in questions for you guys. We told them last week that we were gonna have you on. So one of them that I'll tell you, Coach, that I think you'll love is Laura, her husband gets the emails from All Pro Dad, and she says that it has changed their family. That she loves them, He loves them and that they're these really great practical emails. And so they just wanted to thank you, which I thought was really kind.

Tony: Well, that is awesome. It's great. It's kind of what we're talking about here. They're 32nd emails with just a thought for the day. "Hey, make sure you tell your kids you love them today." It'd be something as simple as that. "At some point during the day, tell your kids you love them." And it makes you think. Men have gotten this... I think we have about a million men now on the email list all throughout the country, and just getting a 32nd reminder in the morning, it's been great. It's been awesome.

Annie: Man, it is going to be so fun when we all get to heaven and we get to see the impact y'all have made on the planet. That's gonna be one of the first thing that I go for. After I see Jesus and Peter, I'm gonna like come and be like, "Can I see the Dungys influence now? Can we see?" That is just incredible. A million families that you're reaching.

Lauren: The blessing behind that is that we were encouraged and mentored by other people. So they were more seasoned Christians that shared their walk. And we were able to see, "Well, how do you do it? And how do you make time? And how do you just invest in the kingdom?" And we observed, we watched and we learned, and then we decided this is something we can do. Now we're passing the torch to others, although you know, there's no retirement in kingdom building.

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: We will do it until the day we go home to be with the Lord. But that was modeled for us. When we were newly married we were with a church and we saw so many people just serving and helping. And we've just kind of walked alongside them and we said, "Well, how do you do it?"

There was a family that had five children, and both mom and dad worked and they were busy, but they always made time for their children, they made time for the Lord. And it was just interesting to see what it looked like. So we were often at

their house. They would serve meals and then "now we're going to go down to the church because we're going to help out." And we're involved in a couple of ministries there. And then we're going to go out and do some fun things because it's important. As a couple you don't want to lose yourself and your children. So they were able to do it and do it well and enjoy. Being a Christian is fun.

So we watched that. We observed that. And we were blessed to see many families doing that. So now we're doing it and we're having a... We're having so much fun. We've been married 40 years-

Annie: Wow.

Tony: Don't say that too loud.

Lauren: We have - what is it? Three decades of raising children and the excitement is still there.

Annie: Wow.

Tony: The other thing I was gonna mention, Annie, you talked about that influence. Well, it's easy to say, "Well, Tony Dungy wrote an email, All Pro Dad sent it out to a million people. Isn't that great?" But in God's eyes, that email that went to a million people is the same as Lauren giving a book to one second grader and that one second grader saying, "Gosh, you know what? This is so interesting. I'm gonna read a little bit more." In God's eyes, it's all the same.

So I think is the message of the book. You don't have to wait to speak to me and people that have an influence, you can influence one person during the course of your day today, and God's gonna be just as pleased.

Annie: Yes, that's beautiful. Okay, the last thing I want to ask y'all about because this is important... There's a lot of... Well, we're going to talk about the Falcons for one more second, Coach. But before that, you write one of the important things in this book is about rest. And I know a lot of coaching families that during season that is very hard to come by. Will you talk a little bit?

Because one of the questions is, how do you prioritize your family? This is from Sarah. She's like, "How do we prioritize our family during football season?" because her husband's a coach, too. So we talk a little bit about family days and why rest matters even in a career that a lot of people have different careers that require a lot of your days, but rest still really matters.

Tony: No, you have to understand it goes back to Genesis. God didn't need to stop on day seven but He stopped and took a rest as an example to us. Okay, we do need to rest. We need to get that. So, yes, as a coach, I could schedule practice every single day, I could have guys practice 20 hours a day and they won't be able to go out and function in the game because they're gonna be tired, they're gonna be worn out.

So rest is just as important as work. That happens in life too. That happens spirit... I mean, you everything. You've got to rest and you've got to recharge and recover. Especially for coaches, you got to schedule that. That's the only way we get things done. So you got to schedule time off. You got to schedule Bible time. You got to schedule times where you just slow down and make it a family day.

Annie: Coach, I think it's so interesting in the book you talk about how when you coach both NFL teams that you gave them Saturday as family day. So it isn't the day after they played the big game, you had them rest the day before they played the big game. That spoke volumes about why rest matters.

Tony: It does. And I learned that from my coach, Chuck Noll, who was a Hall of Fame coach, coach for Super Bowl teams. He did it and it made an impact on me and an impression. So I did it. Well guess what? You talked about having influence. The coaches who were on my staff... Lovie Smith did it in Chicago. They went to the Super Bowl. Mike Tomlin took it and he did it in Pittsburgh, they went to a Super Bowl. Jim Caldwell did it and they went to a Super Bowl.

So it just shows that, you know, even when you don't think you're having influence, and you don't just say, "Hey, you've got to do this," people are watching what you do. And you have an influence by just how you carry out life.

Annie: Miss Lauren, a lot of our friends listening that have little kids, and when we ever talk about Sabbath rest, they're like, "Hey, you're right. Everyone still has to eat and still has... I'm still momming all day long." Will you talk a little bit about what does it look like having rest in your family when there's 10 kids and when there's... you could get the call on a Friday night that two more kids are coming and Saturday is your rest day? How does that look for a mom momming and trying to also rest?

Lauren: Well, as Tony said, you have to be intentional about planning things that don't always work that way. You may have plans to go to the park and have a picnic with the children, but then you get the call that there's a baby that needs to be placed and will you open your home to the baby? So there's some flexibility. But I do plan and I'm intentional about recognizing the fact that we need to take time to spend with the children.

And one of the things that I've learned is, we have a lot of kids, it's important to do the one-on-one with our kids. So it may be just "Come on and ride with me. I'm gonna go to the store and pick up some milk and get some groceries. So come with me." So that child has a chance to talk and have my full attention and not clamoring with all the other voices in the car. So we do that. That's important.

And then also what is special for our kids, they like to have birthday week, not just a birthday. So the whole week they get gifts, they get little presents. We have a tradition. We go to the dollar store, which we now know it's \$1.25. We go to the \$1 store, and the children pick up gifts, not for themselves, but for that child. And so that child feels special.

Those little things that happen that make them feel that, My goodness, it's not a circus at the Dungy house every day. Because there are times when they have to go along with... everyone is going to football practice because mom needs to take, you know, Justin there. But we try to make it so it's the family enjoys each other, they support one another, but they also have their special moments when it's just one on one.

And it's again, prayer. How do I do this, Lord? How am I going to take three children to three different places at the same time? It works out. Sometimes the kids are late, sometimes early, but we're able to get it done. And we enjoy that. We celebrate one another.

Jordan, Tony mentioned has some significant health challenges. But even early on when the kids were going to their practices, he knew that he couldn't play but he would say, "Well, mom, you know, I'm gonna get the snacks together. I'm gonna get their football shoes so they're not gonna rush out the door without their equipment."

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: So we're a family, we're unit, we work together, we celebrate each other, and we have a lot of fun. And it becomes "I get to do this. I get to help. We're gonna go to the game. We made signs. We're going to cheer for Justin as he plays." We love it. We enjoy it.

So it's finding out what the kids like to do and then including them. And a family works together. That's how family operates more smoothly if we're all on the same page and we're working to support one another.

- Tony:** I want to go back to your question though, Annie. And it is important for the moms to get that rest. And you do have the schedule that. Lauren, one of the things she loves is her workouts and physical fitness and running.
- Annie:** Running, yeah.
- Tony:** So she'll say, "Okay, I'm going to hip hop class this morning. You have to get the kids up. You have to watch them in the morning." I've got to sacrifice to do that, so that she can get her time to recharge. That's really important.
- Annie:** That's really important. And if y'all do birthday weeks, that's like three months out of the year, Miss Lauren. That's awesome.
- Lauren:** I think every month we have a birthday.
- Annie:** That's so fun. I love it.
- Lauren:** It's a lot of birthday cake.
- Tony:** May is a big month for us.
- Annie:** Love it. Okay, Coach Dungy, let's talk again about my Atlanta Falcons. We talked a little bit before we started recording, but... are we gonna have a year? I just need my Falcons to have a year.
- Tony:** I hope they do. I'm still a Tampa fan living in Tampa. So, of course, we can only wish them so much fun.
- Annie:** That's true. That's totally fair.
- Tony:** As we're talking, Marcus Mariota is just a favorite of ours. I can remember Marcus throwing balls to Justin when Justin was about four years old.
- Annie:** Wow.
- Tony:** And Marcus has not been the Heisman Trophy winner or the big star. He was just a young player. Well, after he became the star, he never changed. He was the same way. So we've always pulled for him and we hope he does really well. And I think you've got a great leader come in there.
- Annie:** You hope we do well-ish. Just enough.

Tony: Yeah. Absolutely.

Annie: You guys, thank you so much for doing this today. Is there anything we didn't talk about you want to make sure we cover?

Lauren: I think we covered it.

Tony: You did a lot of service. I guess the thing we'd always just tell people is you have an influence. Don't think you don't. How are you going to use it for the Lord? How are you going to use the special gift that He gave you to help other people?

Annie: Yes, that's beautiful. The last question we always ask that I can't wait to hear y'all's answer is because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what you do for fun.

Lauren: We enjoy sports.

Annie: Yes, me too.

Lauren: So fun for us is biking, running, hiking, swimming. We have new kayaks so we're out on the water and just enjoying God's creation and spending time together. We take the kids with us. Sometimes we go alone, but it's the outdoors. That's our enjoyment.

Annie: Same for you, Coach? Outdoors just having fun out there?

Tony: Yeah, I do. I like to be out in nature. We took a cruise about three weeks ago to Alaska with the kids and you talk about seeing God's handiwork and just seeing outdoors and just marveling. It was unbelievable.

Annie: Yeah, I haven't done that yet. I keep wanting to. I mean, a cruise-

Tony: Put it on your bucket list.

Annie: Okay, I believe you. Did you get to see whales?

Tony: And go to Alaska.

Annie: Okay, Alaska.

Tony: Go to Alaska. It's easy to go to the Caribbean and it's warm, and it's beautiful. But you'll see mountains, you'll see trees with 10 bald eagles in them. I mean, things that we just don't get to see. And it was just really, really special. We were up on a

glacier and our guides said, "You can drink from this water." It was the best water that I've ever had.

Lauren: We should have bottled it and-

Annie: And brought it home.

Lauren: It was so refreshing. But it's amazing.

Annie: Okay, I'll add it to my list. Thank you guys. And thanks for writing *Uncommon Influence*. It is an excellent book. I cannot wait for people to get to read it.

Lauren: Thank you.

Tony: Well, thanks so much for having us, Annie.

Annie: Gosh, my pleasure.

[00:58:39] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love them? What a legit honor to have them on the show! Oh my gosh, I am so thankful. That was so cool and so inspiring, right?

Y'all, be sure to grab a copy of *Uncommon Influence*. I think you're really going to love it. And give them a follow on social media. Tell them thanks so much for being on the show. And don't worry, you don't have to buy bunk beds yet. Maybe we all will. But you don't have to buy bunk beds yet. But there's a process. We're gonna start helping families. Just read the book and jump in with me.

Hey, there's still time to sign up to be part of the big group of us going through Chase the Fun all together starting a week from today, Monday, August 15th. You know what we say. The secret sauce is finishing these 100 Day journeys. And we finish better together.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me, well, I'm looking across the podcast studio, engineer Craig is back. And it is so fun that he is back on the team with us. So what sounds

fun to me today is we're getting to the record with our old friend Craig back on the team, so welcome back, Craig.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday talking soul care with my friend Manda Carpenter. See y'all then.